

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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OUT FOR HIS RIGHTS

Or, STARTING A BUSINESS ON HIS NERVE

BY A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—On the Tramp.

"Hello, sonny!"

Tom Truesdale stopped and looked at the speaker. He was a youngish-looking man, smoothly shaven, with a rather hard and reckless air. He and a companion, not much older, fairly well dressed, were bending over the embers of a small fire which had been kindled under a spreading oak by the side of a country road. As it was a comparatively warm evening, the fire had clearly been built for some other purpose than to furnish heat. Under the glowing embers, concealed from Tom's eyes, half a dozen potatoes were baking, and the men were impatiently waiting for them to get done. A foot or two away a newspaper was spread out and lying upon it were a bunch of ham sandwiches and a whole pie.

"Hello, yourself!" replied Tom, who was a bright-faced boy of eighteen, with a wistful look at the provender.

In one hand he carried a suitcase and in the other a good-sized bundle.

"Where are you bound, sonny?" asked the young man.

"Rockland," replied Tom.

"What, on foot?"

"Yes, on foot."

"And you're tramping it with a suitcase and a bundle?"

"Yes."

"Running away from home?" grinned the speaker.

"Not exactly."

"Fired out of the house?" chuckled the young man.

"Yes, I was fired, all right."

"Have a row with your father?"

"Haven't got a father."

"No? Didn't get the razoo from your mother, did you?"

"I haven't a mother, either."

"Been living with a relative and he got tired of supporting you?"

"I've been living with my uncle, but he didn't support me. I worked for him and earned more than I ever got," said Tom bitterly.

"What did he fire you for, then?"

"A man paid him a considerable sum of money this afternoon and he locked it in his bureau drawer, because it was too late to take it to the bank."

"And you hooked some of the money, I suppose, and he bounced you for doing it."

"No, I didn't. What do you think I am—a thief?" asked Tom indignantly.

"Don't get mad. I only thought maybe that was the reason why you're on your uppers. Go on."

"That's all. Good-by!" said Tom, starting to resume his way.

"Hold on, sonny! Don't go off that way. I didn't mean to accuse you of stealing your uncle's money. Come and have a bite with us. We're in hard luck ourselves, and that's why we're eating by the roadside instead of going to a public house, which we can't afford. As you seem to be as bad off as we are, why not share our grub? You're welcome to it."

The man spoke in a friendly and conciliatory way and the boy hesitated. The man who had addressed him noticed his indecision and said:

"Come on, sonny, don't be bashful. We're glad to have your company."

"The spuds are done, I guess," said the other man, poking among the hot ashes with a stick.

"Take them out, then, Barney, and we'll have supper."

Tom concluded to accept the invitation.

"Much obliged to you both," he said, putting down his bundle and suitcase. "I admit I'm hungry, for I left the house before supper. After the trouble with my uncle, and his unjust accusation, I didn't feel that I could take another meal under his roof."

"Did he accuse you of taking some of his money out of his drawer?"

"He said there was a dollar missing."

"What! only a dollar?"

"A dollar looks as big as a house to my uncle."

"Sit down here and help yourself to a potato and a couple of sandwiches. There is salt and pepper in those little papers."

Tom sat down and helped himself.

"Your uncle is a farmer, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"What's his name?"

"Peter White."

"Your name is White, too?"

"No, my name is Truesdale—Tom Truesdale."

"Glad to know you by name. Mine is Jack Nipper, and my friend here is Barney Galvin. How far have you been walking?"

"About six miles."

"Then your uncle's farm is six miles from here?"

"I should judge it was that far."

"What sort of a looking shebang is the house?"

Tom, never dreaming that Nipper was pumping him for a purpose, told him what he wanted to know.

"You've been helping your uncle on the farm?" said Nipper, when he had found out all he wanted to know about the White farm.

"Yes," said Tom.

"What did he pay you?"

"He promised to pay me \$10 a week and my board."

"What did you get?"

"Fifty cents every Saturday night."

"How about the balance?"

"He owes it to me."

"How much does he owe you?"

"About \$200."

"Why don't you get a lawyer to sue him?"

"If he's mean enough to keep it from me, I'm not going to force him to settle. If it was any one else, the case would be different."

"You're foolish to play into his hands. Go back, put up a front and demand your money. You say he's got a bunch of it in the house. Tell him you'll sue him if he doesn't come to time."

Tom shook his head.

"He'd only have a fit and go on like a wild man," he said.

"Suppose he did, what need you care? He owes you the money, doesn't he?"

"I can get along without it."

"Where did you live when your mother was alive?"

"In Rockland."

"Didn't she leave anything to you when she died?"

"If she did, I didn't get it. I always thought she had money for she told me that my father left her well provided for. At any rate, we never wanted for anything. When she died, Mr. White came to Rockland and took charge of everything. On the day after the funeral he asked me what my mother did with her money, for he said he understood she was well off. I told him I suppose she kept it in one of the banks. He said he would look it up in my interest. In a few days he told me that he had found out that shortly before her death my mother had put her money into the stock of a worthless company, and that it was as good as lost. He sold the furniture of the house we lived in, took me home with him, put me to work on the farm, and when I afterward asked him about the stock my mother had bought he told me the company had failed and that the stock wasn't worth the paper it was printed on."

"And you took his word for it?"

"I had to. In any case, I believe he told me the truth."

"How far do you expect to walk to-night? There's a village about seven or eight miles ahead. I suppose you'll put up there," said Nipper.

"I know it. I was aiming for it when you stopped me. It'll take me over two hours to reach it with the load I have to carry," said Tom.

At that moment there was the sound of wagon wheels approaching from the direction the boy had come.

"Here comes a wagon," said Nipper. "Maybe the driver will give you a lift."

"I hope he will, and that he's going as far as the village," said Tom.

He walked out into the road and waited for the vehicle to come up. It proved to be an empty, light wagon, driven by a boy. Tom asked the lad when he reined in if he would give him a ride as far as he was going, as he was handicapped by the suitcase and a bundle.

"Sure! Jump up!" said the boy.

Tom went back for his baggage, bade the two young men good-by, after thanking them for sharing their food with him, and tossing the bundle and the suitcase into the wagon, got up on the seat beside the boy driver.

CHAPTER II.—Tom Reaches Rockland.

"How far are you going?" asked the young driver, starting up his horse.

"I'm bound for Rockland," replied Tom.

"Are you? That's where I'm going."

"You don't say! I'm in luck. I'm willing to pay you a quarter for taking me there."

"Thanks! I never turn down money."

"You live in Rockland?"

"Yes."

"What's your name?"

"Bob Bradley. What's yours?"

"Tom Truesdale. What brought you out this way?"

"I work for a man who sells agricultural implements. He sold a farmer out this way a new plow and a lot of other tools and I've just delivered them."

"I see. Who was the farmer? Maybe I know him."

"Oliver Hobbs."

"His farm is next to my uncle's."

"You've been living on a farm, then?"

"Yes, for two years and a half."

"Got tired of it, I suppose, and are going to Rockland for a change."

"I had trouble with my uncle this afternoon, and the change was not my own seeking."

"Where are you going to put up at to-night when you get there?"

"I was going to a cheap hotel."

"Suppose you come to my house? My mother has a room she'd like to rent. You could have it for \$1 a week. If you want to board with us, too, I guess I can fix it."

"Where do you live?"

"On Prospect street, near Pequoit avenue. It isn't far from the business section."

"I'm much obliged to you for the offer and I'll take you up. I can't promise to be a steady boarder, for if I can't get work in Rockland I'll have to go somewhere else."

By this time they had reached and were passing through the village of Wakefield on their route. It only took them a few minutes to pass through the place and strike the road again beyond.

"Say, who were those chaps you were with when you hailed me and asked for a ride?" asked Bob Bradley.

"I don't know much about them. Their names were Jack Nipper and Barney Galvin. Nipper stopped me as I was passing along the road and

asked me where I was bound. I told him. Then after a few more questions he invited me to share their grub. As I was very hungry, I accepted the invitation and remained with them about an hour. I was just about to resume my tramp when you came along," replied Tom.

"Were they tramps?"

"I don't know. I never thought to ask them."

"I suppose they were temporarily busted and hoofing it between Rockland and Waterford. Maybe they were actors. They had smooth faces, as well as I could see in the darkness."

"Well, those fellows didn't say what their business was, if they had any. I can't say that I fancied them a whole lot, but it was kind in them to share their food with me, so I won't say a word against them."

The seven miles between Wakefield and Rockland were covered in about an hour, and Bob drove his team to a stable where it was kept.

"Come on, Truesdale," he said, jumping down, "we'll go home now. I'll help you carry your suitcase."

Each carried the suitcase by turns, and in a short time arrived at the cottage where Bob Bradley lived. The clock pointed to the hour of ten when they walked into the house. Mrs. Bradley was sewing in the sitting room expecting her son to appear at any moment. She had some supper waiting for him in the oven, but Bob wasn't hungry, as he had had a good supper at Farmer Hobbs' house before setting out on his return.

"Mother, this is Tom Truesdale."

Tom bowed and said he was glad to make her acquaintance.

"I've rented him our spare room for a week, and he would like to board with us, if you are willing," went on Bob. "He will keep the room right along if he gets work in town. He used to live here two or three years ago when his mother was alive. When she died he went to live with his uncle, Peter White, who has a farm twenty miles out of town on the road to Waterford. Now he's back here again, eager to try his luck at something else. Now, mother, what'll you charge him? Make it as easy as you can afford, for he hasn't much money. His uncle owes him over \$200, but refused to let him have any of it when he left, and so all the money he's got is \$10 he saved up."

Mrs. Bradley said she'd let Tom have the room and board for \$3.50 a week. Tom said that was satisfactory, for he couldn't expect to get accommodation anywhere else for less money. He handed Mrs. Bradley the exact amount and the room was his, with board, for a week.

"I have kept your supper for you, Bob," said his mother. "I guess there is enough for both of you."

"Don't want any, mother. Let Tom have it. I had a bang-up supper at the farmhouse where I carried the plow and other things," said Bob.

The food Tom had eaten by the roadside had only taken the edge off his appetite, so he made no objection to partaking of Bob's supper as long as his new friend didn't want it. He cleaned up the plates and finished the cup of tea. As Bob was curious to learn about the trouble Tom had had with his uncle, which led to his sudden departure from the farm, Tom gave him the full

particulars, to which he added a brief retrospect of his life on the White farm, which did not speak well for his uncle's treatment of him during the time he was there. It was after eleven by that time, and as Tom was very tired, Bob took him up to a small back room on the second floor and bade him good-night.

CHAPTER III.—Tom Demonstrates an Axiom.

Tom put in a good night's rest and tumbled out of bed when Bob knocked on his door. The boys ate breakfast together, and then Tom accompanied his new friend as far as the store where he worked.

"There might be an advertisement or two in the paper that would just suit you, Tom," said Bob, after he had opened up the store. "There's a newspaper stand on the corner. Get the Record. That carries the most want advertisements."

So Tom went and bought a copy of the Rockland Morning Record and looked over the want advertisements. Several boys were wanted, and he started out to try and catch on at one of the places. Luck was against him, and when he came out of the last place on his list, a ship chandlery shop on the water front, he was no better off than when he started in. He then strolled out on one of the wharves to watch a large schooner loading with a cargo of shingles.

"Hello, sonny!" said a man, coming up to him. "Do you want a few hours' job?"

"Yes," replied Tom eagerly.

"Come with me, then. I want you to keep tally of these bundles of shingles as they are hoisted aboard the schooner. There should be ten bundles in each sling—understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Count them as they come over the side and see that ten go into the hold each time. Then make a mark on the paper that the man who is keeping count now will turn over to you. Every fifth mark is drawn diagonally across the other four and shows fifty. If a sling should bring only eight bundles aboard don't let it go down into the hold. Send it back for the other two."

Tom liked the novelty of his job and having a sharp eye, he easily kept count of the bundles of shingles in each sling. Invariably there were ten, which showed that the men on the wharf were making no mistakes; at least so far. Two hours passed and over half of the shingles were in the hold. Then the noon whistle sounded just as a slingful of shingles came over the side. Tom marked it down and the engineer lowered it into the hold as all hands stopped work for dinner. The boy looked around for the mate who had put him to work. He was not in sight at the moment.

"How long before work begins again?" he asked one of the men who had seated himself on the stringer of the wharf to eat his dinner.

"One o'clock," replied the man. "Go and get your own peck. There's a restaurant across the way."

Tom, however, felt that he ought to see the mate before he left the schooner. As he started forward to inquire about him of one of the sailors,

somebody shouted: "Boy!" Tom turned around and saw the mate standing aft, looking at him. The man motioned him to approach. He did so.

"Put that paper in your pocket, young man, and follow me. You'll eat with us in the cabin," he said.

He led Tom down a brass-bound short flight of stairs, into an oblong room in the center of which was a table covered with dishes.

"Take that vacant seat and the steward will wait on you," said the mate.

Tom thought the dinner served to the captain, the mate and himself was first-class, and he enjoyed it very much. When the meal was over he went on deck to lounge around until the whistle blew for the resumption of work. Finally he extended his walk up the dock to look at a big sloop that was being warped into her berth. While looking at her, a man dressed in a tweed suit, with a soft slouch hat, came up to him.

"How de do, young man?" he said, twirling his mustache with one hand.

"How do you do, sir," replied Tom, taking him in and wondering who he was.

"You're employed on board the schooner, I believe?"

"Yes," answered Tom, surprised at the question.

"Tally-clerk, eh?"

"Yes."

"Just for the job?"

"Yes."

"It doesn't pay much, does it?"

"I'm satisfied with what I've been promised."

"You'd be better satisfied if you got \$5 more, wouldn't you?"

"I don't understand what you are getting at."

"Have you got the tally-sheet with you?"

"I have. Why?"

"Did the mate look at it when the men knocked off work?"

"No, he did not."

"Will you let me look at it?"

"Why should I? You have nothing to do with the schooner."

"No, but I am interested in the shingles that are going on board. I'd like to know how many you've got in the hold so far."

"Five thousand six hundred and eighty bundles," replied Tom, who remembered the number.

"Sure of that, are you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good! Do you want to earn \$5 easily?"

"How?" asked Tom.

"Alter two marks to your list as it stands, making it 5,700, and I'll hand you \$5," said the man.

"Why should I do that? The mate told me to be careful to keep exact count of the bundles, as the owner of the schooner is responsible for any mistake I might make," said Tom. "I don't take bribes."

"Then you won't make the deal?"

"No, I won't."

"Don't then."

With those words the man walked off, clearly much disgruntled over his failure to work Tom for the twenty bundles of shingles. Shortly afterward the whistle blew and the boy resumed his work at the hatchway of the schooner. Two hours later the last of the shingles were on board. Tom turned his tally sheet over to the

mate and received his pay. Tom thanked him and went away, much pleased with the results of the day. He reached Bob's store about the time his friend was knocking off for the day, and they went home together.

CHAPTER IV.—Looking for Work.

"Hello!" exclaimed Bob, who was reading the afternoon paper while eating his supper, "here's something that will interest you."

"What is it?" asked Tom, whom he addressed.

"Your Uncle Peter White was robbed last night of a considerable sum of money which he had in his bureau drawer by two young men who entered the house about midnight and bound and gagged him beforehand. The old man says that they seemed to know just where he kept the money, for they lost no time in looking around the room, but went directly to the bureau, broke open the drawer, took the money and some old-fashioned pieces of jewelry, including Mr. White's gold watch, which he only wore on Sunday or when he went out of an evening."

"You say he was robbed by two young men!" said Tom. "Is their description in the paper?"

"No. Mr. White says that the greater part of their faces were concealed by their handkerchiefs."

"I wonder if the thieves were the two young men I ate the roadside supper with? I remember now that the chap by the name of Nipper asked me a good many questions about my uncle's farmhouse. I didn't think at the time that he was pumping me, but it strikes me now that he was," said Tom.

"I wouldn't be surprised but they were the birds," said Bob.

"I suppose the rascals got away with the money and left no clue to trace them by," said Tom.

"That's right. The Waterford police are watching for them, and the police of this town have been asked to keep on the lookout for them. But I don't see how they can be detected without a description."

"Even if they are caught, unless they have something about them that will connect them with the robbery they can't be held unless my uncle is able to positively identify them."

After supper Tom decided that it was his duty to go to the Rockland police and give them a description of the two men he hobnobbed with on the road. The police could then use the information or not, as they chose. Bob accompanied him to the station-house. The man at the desk listened to Bob's story, asked him several questions, and then said that he would submit the matter to his superior and let him decide if there was any connection between the two men and the pair who robbed his uncle. On the following morning Tom answered several more want advertisements in person, but he was no more successful than on the preceding day. Several days passed, and though Tom picked up odd jobs which panned out enough to pay his expenses, he couldn't get hold of anything that was steady. It looked as if he would have to pull up stakes and travel to some other town. Tom regretted

that he had not learned a trade instead of putting in two years and a half on his uncle's farm. However, there was no use in crying over spilt milk. He was not too old yet to learn a trade, but he did not know what trade would interest him. Unless he tackled the trade for which he was specially fitted he would practically waste more time. Then it was quite possible that he was not fitted for any trade, but that his bent of mind ran in some other direction. On the following day Tom called at a large grocery store on the main street in answer to an advertisement for a smart boy. To his great disgust he found that the job had been captured five minutes before he arrived.

"I'm sorry, young man," said the manager, looking him over in a favorable way. "I like your appearance and I certainly would have hired you had you come first. Give me your name and address, and if the new boy doesn't measure up to our standard I'll send for you."

Tom gave him the information.

"By the way," said the manager, as if struck with an idea, "how would you like to go around and take orders for us? If you can make good at that, you'll earn a good deal more than as a store boy. You look uncommonly smart and bright to me, and you have rather a taking manner about you. I'll map out a route for you in a new quarter of the town that is building up rapidly and you can try your luck for a week or two. We'll allow you a varying commission on all orders you take. Suppose you tackle it?"

Tom considered the matter a few minutes. The idea rather appealed to him. He was a natural hustler, and the thought suddenly occurred to him that here was a chance that might be right in his line. At any rate, it seemed worth undertaking. Then he would be his own boss, and that was a pleasant idea.

"Would I have to confine myself to the route you mapped out for me?" he asked.

"It would be to your advantage to do so. Your object should be to build up a regular trade for yourself. As soon as you became known as our representative, you would find your work easier, and your daily orders would soon earn you a good weekly commission, which you could increase by energy and push."

"But I know a number of people in different parts of the town. I should like to strike them at the start, as I think I would be more likely to get orders from them than from strangers. I have to make a showing of some kind or I'll be on my uppers, for I haven't much money to live on, and when that's gone I'll be up against it hard."

"Well, I appreciate the difficulty you have to contend with. I'll furnish you with our private price list, and you can start out right away and see what you can do to-day with the people you know. In the morning I'll furnish you with a regular route to work up which you must stick to, but any orders you get outside of that will also go to your credit. Your commissions will be reckoned up to Friday night, and you will be paid whatever is coming to you on Saturday afternoon."

"All right, sir. I'll try my hand and see what I can do," said Tom.

Half an hour later he dropped in at Bob's store

to tell him about the business he had gone into on trial.

"You stand to make good money, Tom, if you are adapted to selling goods," said Bob. "Later on, when you have accumulated enough capital, you might find it to your advantage to open a store."

Provided with his price-list and a padded bunch of order blanks, Tom went off to call on people he used to know in the neighborhood where he lived when his mother was alive. He was full of confidence in himself and his ability to get orders, but he found ere long that all is not gold that glitters. About half the people he had known either intimately or in a general way had moved to other locations, and the others did not remember him until he introduced himself all over again. The locality was the oldest part of the town, and there was a grocery store to every block almost, and he found that people didn't care to deal with anybody else than the storekeeper they were trading with. The best he could do was to secure a few orders for tea and coffee from those who were somewhat dissatisfied with the brand they were getting. He was a bit discouraged with his start, and when he stopped to eat at a small restaurant about two o'clock he had earned but little so far. When he paid his check he tried to get an order from the restaurant for tea and coffee, but there was nothing doing for him. The man got talking with him and found out what he was driving at, and what poor luck he had had so far in that section.

"If I was you I'd quit looking for orders on this side of town," said the restaurant man. "Get over on the other side and hustle there. I walked through there last Sunday and I noticed it was growing rapidly. The grocery stores are as yet few and new, and their patrons are not wedded to them. Get over there and build up a trade for yourself. The first in the field are the chaps who have the best show of getting a firm grip. Take it from me, you will never do much on this side."

"I think you're right," replied Tom. "I'll get into the new section and see how things will pan out."

He bade the man good-by and started at once for the north end of town.

CHAPTER V.—Tom Has a Nervy Plan.

When he got over there he first noticed quite a number of stores to rent. Above the stores were tenements occupied already by factory workers. Farther along on the cross streets were the new homes of people in moderate circumstances. Pursuing his way, he came to a better grade of dwelling in which were living families of some social standing. Tom spent the afternoon looking over the ground, which he guessed was the district the manager of the grocery establishment had in view for him. On his way home he made a number of calls and took orders for coffee, tea and canned goods. When Saturday came around he was doing as well as any of the clerks in the store, and his rapid progress was a surprise, even to the manager. The program for

the following week was for him to put in his mornings and evenings at the store, and his afternoons as a trade canvasser. He picked up trade at the start, and every evening turned in quite a list of orders, which it was his duty to fill himself so that they could be delivered early next day by the wagon that was put on that route. The driver of the wagon was not expected to do any canvassing, but was instructed to take any orders given him by the parties to whom he delivered the goods on Tom's orders, and these were credited to Tom, and he drew a commission on them. At the end of the third week Tom's connection as a salesman at the store under wages ceased, as the clerk who had been ill came back to duty, and his earnings depended on his success as a canvassing salesman. Up to that point he had averaged about \$12 on commission and wages, which was \$2 more than his friend Bob was getting. His first week on commission alone netted him \$16, and he was as happy as a lord. His second week, however, dropped to \$9 and the manager asked him what was the trouble.

"A new store has opened up in the neighborhood where there was a pressing need for it and it has hurt me," replied Tom. "I've done some tall thinking about it, and I'd like to make you a proposition."

"What is your proposition?"

"It's rather a nervy one, but I think it will pay you. Rent a store in the same block, stock it, and put me in charge. I'll make it pay."

The manager shook his head.

"No, we couldn't do that. We can only use you as a canvasser. Get a hustle on and see if you can't keep the trade you have worked up and increase it."

Tom was a bit disappointed, but still he had to confess that the manager could hardly be expected to fall in with his proposition. He was full of the idea of running a store in opposition to the new one which had opened up on his route. He felt that being on the spot all the time would give him a better hold on the trade than calling around once a day for a store which could not make a delivery before the following afternoon. Most of the customers wanted their orders delivered the same day, and as that could not be done by his store, he saw that he was losing more ground than he gained. He talked the matter over with Bob.

"If I only had the capital, I'd open a store on my own hook," he said.

"How about trying to get that \$200 your uncle owes you?" said Bob.

"About as much chance as I have of flying."

"Why don't you see a lawyer about it?"

"I haven't got the time just now."

"It will be some time before you get capital enough to open a grocery store."

"I suppose so, and in the meanwhile other stores will start up and the trade I have, and the new customers that I am getting hold of, will slip away from me to my rivals. This district I am working I consider mine by right of being the first on the ground to hustle for trade. I want to hold on to it, but I can easily see that under the present arrangements, that is out of the question. I'll be driven out in a few months and a fine chance to establish a business for myself will be gone."

"Well, you have my sympathy," said Bob. "If I could help you, I'd do it in a minute."

"I hate to give up a good thing. I feel like fighting to hold every inch of ground I have gained."

"That's right, stand out for your rights."

"Do you know what I've a great mind to do?"

"What?"

"Go down to one of the two wholesale grocery houses on First street, see the head boss and ask him to stake me in a store."

"Gee! That would be pretty nervy. I'm afraid he'd throw you out as a lunatic. The idea of asking a man to whom you are a stranger to furnish you with the capital to start in business."

"If I succeeded, I guess I wouldn't be the first who started a business on his nerve. Nerve goes a long way sometimes."

"It might with a man, but you're only a boy."

"I'm as smart as many men, and don't you make any mistake about it."

"I guess you are, but you aren't smart enough to carry out such a plan as you have mentioned."

"What will you bet on it?"

"Do you mean to say that you think you can do it?"

"Do you dare me to try?"

"I do. I've got a \$5 bill that says you won't come within a mile of doing it."

"I won't bet you, for \$5 bills are too scarce with me to risk on a desperate scheme, but I'll see your dare and make the attempt to-morrow morning."

"Better order an ambulance to be on hand in front of the wholesale house to take you to the hospital," grinned Bob.

"Don't you worry about my needing an ambulance. I consider it a fair business proposition I intend to submit."

"A business proposition with the advantage all on your side."

"I consider that my ability to run a store successfully with the trade I have and what I expect to get is a sufficient offset to the amount of stock I shall ask the wholesaler to advance."

"I never heard of a wholesaler supplying a stock of goods on such security. How are you going to convince the wholesaler of your ability?"

"By talking straight from the shoulder."

"But talk isn't evidence."

"I can refer him to the firm I'm with."

"But the firm you're with might not want to lose you, in which case the manager might not back you up."

"Why, the fact that the firm has employed me for some weeks soliciting orders is evidence that I must be doing something. If I was a failure, I wouldn't be kept."

"That's right enough, but it doesn't prove that you're better than the average salesman."

"Well, there is no use of us arguing the matter. I'll let you know to-morrow night how I have made out."

"All right. I hope you'll win out," said Bob.

CHAPTER VI.—Starting a Business on Nerve.

After turning in his orders next morning at the store, Tom, instead of starting on his route,

walked down to First Street. The two wholesale grocery houses were in the same block and on the same side of the street. Tom had learned that a hot rivalry for trade was going on between them, and it was this fact that largely influenced him in seeking an interview with the head of one of them and submitting his nervy plan. If he failed, he intended to bring his proposition to the attention of the other wholesaler. He knew that one of the houses was selling to most of the retailers in the new district, so he intended to interview the other and suggest that it would be much to his advantage to back him in an enterprise that would enable him to place his goods in the field now practically controlled by his rival. William B. Day was the wholesaler he sent his name in to. The other establishment was owned by Timothy Martin.

"Well, what can I do for you, young man?" asked Mr. Day, when Tom was admitted to his private office at the back of the counting-room.

"I've a proposition I'd like to submit to you, Mr. Day," said Tom, in his usually attractive way.

"I'll listen to you," said Day, who was favorably impressed by his young visitor.

"It's rather a nervy one, sir, but it's full of business," smiled Tom.

The gentleman nodded encouragingly.

"I have been working as a special salesman for Brown, Jones & Co., on Main street, for some weeks, canvassing the new district at the northern end of the town. I found it a fine field for enterprise, and I have done well up to this point. Now I have run against a snag. A new store, stocked by Timothy Martin, has opened up in the heart of my trade, and as Brown, Jones & Co., being downtown, cannot deliver orders on the same day that I take them, my customers are beginning to give a part of their trade at least to the new store. I foresee that the ultimate result will be that I shall lose my grip, and as a matter of course, my firm will lose the trade."

Tom paused and Mr. Day looked at him inquiringly, as if wondering what his talk was leading up to.

"I decided that the only solution of the difficulty was for Brown, Jones & Co. to stock a store in the district and let me run it. I brought the matter to the manager's attention and the suggestion was turned down. Well, if Brown, Jones & Co. can afford to lose what I have gained for them I can't afford to lose the trade, for my living depends on the commission I make out of it. But I'm bound to lose it if I can't make a change in conditions. My object in calling on you is to propose that you stock a store for me wholly on credit, for I have no capital to make an advance payment, as is customary. If you will take a chance on my business ability, backed by the trade I now control, I can assure you that you will be the gainer by it."

Tom paused again, but as Mr. Day made no reply, he went on:

"Timothy Martin, your business rival, is laying pipes to supply all the stores that start in the new section. I believe he is offering exceptionally easy terms. Now if you will stand in with me I will push your goods in a way that will make the Timothy Martin specials look like a hand-organ beside a brass band. As Brown, Jones & Co. get their general stock from you it

is your goods that I have been selling, and I want to keep on selling them, for my customers are well satisfied with them, but if they can't get them on time, of course they are going to flop over to people who can deliver on time. If I had a good stock of your goods, particularly your specials, which I regard as superior in many ways to the specials of Timothy Martin, in a store right on the ground, I'd make the fur fly in the northern district. I'd put a stop on any more stores starting there for a while, and I'd put the new one out of business, or at least prevent the spread of Timothy Martin's specials. Of course, I'd expect to have a fight on my hands with Martin, but that would only make me hustle the harder. I want to beat him out the worst way. That's my proposition. Size me up, Mr. Day. Make inquiries about me of Brown, Jones & Co. Take any means you choose to satisfy yourself that I'll be on the job with both feet, and then give me your answer; but let it be quick, for time is precious. I can't afford to let the grass grow under my feet."

"You say you have no money, young man?"

"Not a red, but I have unlimited energy and ambition, and that will make the money for me, whether you give me the start or not."

The wholesaler was much impressed by his young visitor, but he was a cautious business man and did nothing without reflection. Tom's plan for pushing his goods favorably impressed him. In fact, he had become aware that his business rival was advertising for good grocers with a small capital to come to Rockland and start in business under his wing. He saw that Timothy Martin was aiming to do the lion's share of the wholesale business in Rockland, and he was at his wits' end to find a way to block him. Tom appeared with his plan at a fortunate moment, and Mr. Day decided then and there to take it into immediate consideration. It was not business to stock a dealer on credit entirely. Timothy Martin would do it, he was satisfied, but if this boy could make good the risk would be offset by the gain he would make from a largely increased sale not only of his standard stock, which Martin sold as well, but particularly in his specials, the sale of which Martin had already hurt considerably.

"Do you live with your parents?" asked the wholesaler.

"No, sir. I have no parents. I am out for myself in the world."

"How long have you been working for Brown, Jones & Co.?"

Tom told him.

"You started in without a customer?"

"Yes, sir."

"And what volume of business are you doing now?"

Tom mentioned his best average.

"Not bad," said Mr. Day. "Not bad."

"But I could double it with a store on the spot."

"Do you expect me to rent a store, too?"

"No, sir. I'll manage that. All I want of you is the stock. I know you ought to have some security. It is business. But I haven't got it to offer. All I have to guarantee my part of the bargain is my honesty, for which you'll have to take my word, and my business capacity, of

which I have given you some idea, and which the books of Brown, Jones & Co. will confirm. You are taking an unusual risk with me, but it is going to pay you in the end. You need a person like me to head off Timothy Martin. Now is the time to educate the newcomers of the northern district who have been using the Martin specials elsewhere up to your own standard. If the chance is missed it will be hard to recover it—perhaps next door to impossible. I want to go right for that trade. New people are moving in every week into the buildings that are going up. Shall they buy the Martin specials or the Day specials? That's the question I want to solve to the advantage of the latter. I see a future for myself. Every one has the right to succeed and make money, and I am out for my rights. In helping myself I will be helping you in pushing your goods."

"Young man, your proposition is certainly nervy, but it has elements in it that appeal to me. I will take it under consideration. Call at this time to-morrow morning and you shall have my answer."

"All right, sir," said Tom, rising.

"Your name is Thomas Truesdale?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you live at——"

"182 Prospect street."

"Very well. That is all at present."

Tom bowed himself out and took a car for his district. On the following morning he called on Mr. Day again. He felt that it was the most important moment in his life. On this occasion he was a bit nervous, for so much depended on the gentleman's decision in the matter. He knew he would be awfully disappointed if he got the turndown. Mr. Day's face looked pleasant and that was encouraging to him.

"I have weighed your proposition chiefly with respect to its effect on my trade, and have made some inquiries with respect to yourself," said the wholesaler. "After due deliberation I have decided that I will accede to your proposition."

"Thank you, sir," said Tom, delighted beyond measure.

Of course, Tom agreed to whatever terms Mr. Day proposed, and the documents were to be ready for his signature as soon as he had put in his order for the goods he required to open up with.

CHAPTER VII.—Getting Ready for Business.

Tom lost no time in getting down to business. The first thing on the program was to rent a store, and the next get his shelving up. He had to do this on his nerve, too, for he had only \$50 to his name. He picked out a corner store, the rent of which was \$50 a month, but as stores were not in great demand in that block, and most of them were still unlet, he induced the landlord to take \$25 down for the first two months, after which the regular rent would hold for the term of his lease, made out for three years. Then he looked up a carpenter, fetched him around to the store and asked for an estimate on shelving. The counters he intended to get at a secondhand fixture shop. He got a second esti-

mate from another carpenter. He found that the lowest figure at which he could fit his store out for was \$250 cash, and he had only \$25. He went to a stable, hired a saddle-horse and started for his uncle's farm. He found the old gentleman in the yard.

"Uncle, I have come for the \$235 you owe me. As I need it right away, I shall trouble you to cash up at once," said Tom, without any unnecessary introduction.

Peter White stood and glared at him, speechless at his nerve.

"Get off this farm, and if you ever come back again I'll set the dog on you!" cried White, as soon as he got his tongue in working order.

"All right, uncle. I have made my demand and you have refused me. I shall see a lawyer at once and sue you for my wages. You'll have the cost of the suit to pay, for you're bound to lose, and the sheriff will levy on your place, taking possession of enough of your stock to satisfy the judgment. Remember, that when a farmhand obtains a judgment for wages, no property owned by his employer is exempt from execution, except a few necessary articles of household furniture specified by law."

Tom started to go, and his uncle began to rave like a wild man. Finally he called the boy back.

"Do you know that I was robbed of \$1,000 the night you left?" he said.

"I read about it in the Rockland paper. I suppose that was the money you scrapped with me about, and said I took a dollar of."

"I found the dollar on the floor."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"But it's my opinion you sent those men to rob me."

"I did? You seem to have a fine opinion of me."

"How did they know I had the money in the house?"

"How should I know?"

"You do know. A Rockland detective called on me and told me that you met two men on the road that evening and you gave their description to the police."

"That's right. I met the men, and when I read about the robbery I thought they might have been connected with it, and I went to the police and told them about the appearance of the men. That was a friendly act toward you, wasn't it?"

"You didn't tell the police all you knew about them, I guess," growled the old man. "I wouldn't be surprised but you got a commission out of that robbery."

"Say, you're about the limit, Mr. White. I believe you'd accuse me of anything, just out of pure spite. First, you said I took a dollar of your money and you bounced me off the farm for it. Now you admit that you found the dollar on the floor. That is mistake number one. Then you have got it into your head that I sent the robbers to your house. There is no use reasoning with you. I am going to open a store in Rockland and I want that \$235 you owe me. If you won't give it to me willingly, I am going to sue for it at once. That's all there is to it. I'm out for my rights now, and I'm going to have them. While I'm about it, I may as well get the lawyer to look into that stock you said my mother invested her money in before she died.

If there is anything coming to me from that quarter I'm going to have that, too."

The mention of the stock and Tom's threat to have a lawyer look into it, threw Peter White into a panic.

"I'll give you the money if you promise not to go to a lawyer," he said nervously.

"All right. Hand it over," said Tom.

"Come into the house and sign a receipt for it."

Tom followed him in and his uncle got the money for him.

"You ain't got no reason to see a lawyer now," said the old man, who seemed quite anxious on that point."

"Not about the money you paid me. We are square on that head."

"You ain't got no other reason to see one. I don't owe you nothing more."

"You've got that stock you told me my mother bought before she died. That belongs to me. I think you'd better hand it over to me."

"It ain't no good."

"If it isn't, what do you want to keep it for?"

"I don't want to keep it, but I've mislaid it and can't give it to you now. As soon as I find it I'll let you know."

"Look here, uncle, are you sure that it wasn't money instead of stock that my mother left?"

"What put that idea in your head?" asked Mr. White nervously.

"Because I never heard her say that she bought any stock."

"It ain't likely she would tell a boy like you were at the time what she done."

"How do you know it isn't? I think it is quite likely she would have confided the fact to me. At any rate, you never have been asked to give an accounting of what you took charge of after her death. You sold all the personal property and kept the money you got for it. You had no right to do that."

"It didn't amount to much. I spent the money on you."

"How did you?"

"I bought you a suit of store clothes and other things."

"Well, I've no time to argue the matter with you. You hunt up that stock and send it to me. My address is 182 Prospect street. If I don't hear from you in a reasonable time, you'll hear from me."

Thus speaking, Tom mounted his horse and rode back to town. He was late for his supper, but Mrs. Bradley kept it in the oven for him, the same as she did for her son when he was detained by business. Bob was reading the evening paper.

"Well, how about that business of yours?" he asked.

"It's settled," replied Tom, and he then told Bob the details.

As Tom was now tired, he went to bed.

CHAPTER VIII.—Tom Meets Nipper and Barney.

Tom put the carpenter at work in the morning, and then he started around on his route to take orders for Brown, Jones & Co., as usual. It was necessary for him to do that in order to keep

in touch with his customers. He didn't look for any new customers, but he got a couple by accident. He told all his people that he was going to open a store on the corner of Union avenue and Taylor street, and by the first of next week would make his deliveries on the day he got the orders. He got downtown by five o'clock and left an order for printing with the printer next to Bob's store. Then he reported at the store and turned in his orders for the day. Afterward he arranged with a painter to put his name and business on his store windows and paint a wooden sign to go over the door. Finally he advertised in the Record for a smart girl of seventeen or eighteen, familiar with the grocery business, answers to be sent to "T. T.," care of the paper. When he got home Bob had news for him.

"I met a man to-day who has a horse and wagon that he wants to rent out for three or four months," he said. "It will just suit you. I promised to bring you around to-night to see him about taking the team."

"All right, I'm on," said Tom, as they sat up to supper.

After the meal, Tom and Bob visited the man, and he took them to his stable, a small one in his own yard, and showed the horse. The wagon, which had a cover, stood in a shed. Tom arranged to hire the team and also to keep it and look after it at the owner's stable. That relieved Tom of one anxiety that had greatly bothered him. He paid the first month's hire in advance and got the use of the rig right away. He used it next morning to get around among his customers, and as he saved a lot of time he was able to hustle for some new trade. The carpenter had the shelving all up by Friday night, and as the counters were delivered in the meanwhile, he placed them securely in position. He made a sort of school desk for Tom on top of the end of the last counter and supplied it with a lock. Tom bought a second-hand ice chest that had been in use in some grocery store and had it put in at the back of the store. He managed to get it partly on credit, as he couldn't pay the full amount. Then he arranged with the ice company to supply him regularly with ice. Friday morning he sent in a partial list of goods he wanted to the wholesale house of Wm. B. Day, and said that the house could make any additions to the list that he had omitted. He ordered everything to be delivered Saturday afternoon, as he and Bob were going to dress the store and get things in shape that night if they had to stay up till the small hours of the morning to finish up. Tom received a number of answers to his advertisement, and picking out two or three, he wrote to the applicants to call at the Bradley cottage Friday evening, where he interviewed them, and finally picked out a particularly nice girl of seventeen years who had worked two years for her uncle until his death recently put her out of business. She was thoroughly familiar with the grocery business, and Tom regarded himself as very lucky to get her.

She was told to report at the store on Monday morning at half-past seven. At four o'clock on Saturday afternoon a heavy truck stopped in front of the store with the goods from the wholesale house. They were unloaded on the sidewalk.

Tom, who had just returned with a stack of orders, hired a couple of boys to rush the boxes into the store, which had already been swept and scrubbed by a woman he had hired for the purpose. As soon as the goods were inside, he locked up and drove to the store of Brown, Jones & Co. to get his orders filled at once so he could deliver them right away. He piled in and helped to fill the orders, promising to send in the money on Monday some time. The manager wished him success in his new venture, and told him the store would help him out whenever he ran short and couldn't reach the wholesaler's. Tom had to hustle like fun to deliver and make his collections that evening. He left Bob at work in the store opening the boxes and getting their contents ready to go on the shelves. He got back to the store at ten o'clock, after putting up his rig, and then taking off his coat he sailed in, like a house afire. The boys worked till three in the morning, by which time they had the bulk of the goods in place. Then they went home and turned in. After a late breakfast they were at the store again to finish the job. By two o'clock everything was shipshape, the boxes and debris piled in the cellar and the store swept clean as a whistle. After dinner the boys made out the retail price list for the girl's guidance in the morning, and after supper Tom got his rig and he and Bob drove out to a farm a few miles from Rockland and arranged with the farmer to buy milk, eggs and sundry vegetables from him regularly.

"Well, old man, I've just skinned through," said Tom, as they drove back to town. "The only money I've left is what I've collected for Brown, Jones & Co. on the last orders they will get through me. There is a commission coming to me out of that, however. It has been a narrow squeeze, and I've got to make money from the start to hold my head above water. You have been a great help to me, Bob, and I am very grateful to you for it. A friend in need is a friend indeed, they say."

"And I'm ready to help you right along, Tom, as long as you need my services," replied Bob, in a hearty tone.

"I know you are, and I won't forget your kindness."

At that moment two men stepped out of the shrubbery and one of them grabbed the horse by the bridle and stopped him.

"Hello! What do you mean by stopping my horse?" cried Tom, looking hard at the men, whose faces in the gloom looked familiar to him.

"We want a lift to town," replied one of them, coming close to the wagon.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Nipper, is it?" said Tom, recognizing him.

"Hello! So we meet again, young man," said Nipper, now identifying Tom.

"It appears so. If you chaps want a ride, jump in. I owe you a favor and will be glad to return it," said Tom.

"Let go the horse, Barney. This chap is a friend of ours," said Nipper.

He went over to the bushes, pulled out a bag that gave forth a clinking sound, and put it in the wagon. Then the pair jumped in themselves and squatted down behind the seat.

"What are you doing with this rig, sonny?" asked Nipper.

"My friend and I are returning from a little jaunt in the country."

"How have you been making out since we saw you last?"

"All right."

"Holding down a job, I suppose?"

"Yes, I have been."

"Where are you hanging out?"

"I'm boarding at a cottage on Prospect street. What have you got in that bag?"

"Junk, sonny, that we're taking to town to sell."

Tom had his suspicions that the contents of the bag was more valuable than junk. He believed it was plunder from some farmhouse the men had robbed, for he was pretty well convinced that they were really crooks and had robbed his uncle of the \$1,000.

"Are you in the junk business?" he asked.

"No, sonny, but as we're hard up we're glad to make a raise any way we can."

"Still hard up, eh? Can't you find any work to do? By the way, what is your business?"

"We're sleight-of-hand artists," chuckled Nipper.

"You mean you perform on the stage?" said Tom, not taking much stock in the man's reply.

"Do we perform on the stage, Barney?" grinned Nipper.

"I bet you we do!" replied Barney. "We're artists."

"Where did you perform last?" asked Tom.

"We gave a private exhibition of our dexterity at a farmhouse last night," said Nipper.

Tom thought he understood the real meaning of the man's reply, but he did not deem it prudent to let on that he did.

"I suppose most of your performances are private?" he said dryly.

"Yes, sonny. Barney and me travel around the country displaying our versatility whenever the opportunity offers, but the business doesn't pay as well as it used to, that's why we're on the ragged edge."

"You don't look as if you had suffered much since I saw you last."

"You can't tell by appearances, sonny. Never judge a book by its cover."

They had entered town by this time and Tom looked around to see if there was a policeman in sight, but there wasn't.

"I guess we'll get down here, sonny. We're much obliged for the ride. We'll do the same for you some time if we get the chance," said Nipper.

Tom reined in and the men got out with their bag and walked down a dark street toward the water front.

"Were those the fellows you were with when I first met you along the road?" asked Bob.

"Those are the chaps. I'll bet they have robbed some farmhouse and have the plunder in that bag. It jingled like silverware."

"You ought to notify the police of your suspicions."

"I intend to. I'm going right to the station-house."

Ten minutes later they stopped in front of police headquarters. Tom went in and told the

officer at the desk about the men and the bag he had taken up on the road and brought to town.

"I suspect those are the men who robbed my uncle, Peter White, whose farm is on the Waterford road, a couple of months ago. The night of the robbery I met them on the road, three or four miles from the farm, which I had just left. It is my opinion they are crooks and that they have robbed some farmhouse not far out of town."

Tom told the officer the direction they went after parting from the wagon, and the officer made a note of the fact. He took down Tom's name and address and then the boy rejoined Bob, drove to the stable and put up the rig. Then they went home and went to bed early.

CHAPTER IX.—A Hot Rivalry.

Tom was up at half-past five next morning and was out of the house at six, leaving Bob and his mother still in bed. He took a hasty breakfast of coffee and rolls at a near-by restaurant and then started for the stable to get his rig. He spent half an hour attending to the horse and reached his store at nearly half-past seven. He had hardly got opened up when Miss Jennie Jarvis, his clerk, appeared ready to start in. Tom handed her his price list so she could familiarize herself with the selling figure of his goods, which was not much different in most respects to what her late uncle had charged in his store on the other side of town. The Day specialties embraced tea, coffee, certain brands of canned goods and various other articles all bearing the Day label. The Timothy Martin specialties were very much the same. Each wholesaler kept a standing advertisement in the Rockland papers calling attention to the superior excellence of his own brands.

The Day products found most favor among the better class of people, while the Martin goods circulated more among the average and poorer classes. Tom, as the representative for Brown, Jones & Co., had combined his efforts to the medium class. Brown, Jones & Co. catered chiefly to the best people in Rockland and served them direct. The manager had hired Tom with the view of reaching a middle-class trade, but the firm's methods of delivering orders on the day after their receipt did not take with the customers Tom got, and the boy would have lost his grip if he had not managed to open a store on the ground so as to be able to make deliveries within a few hours of their receipt. Tom had had card signs made calling attention to his butter, eggs, and other things, and some of these he put in his windows, with the signs furnished him by the wholesaler to advertise his specialties. The wagon of the farmer, with whom Tom had arranged to buy milk, eggs and vegetables direct, stopped at his store soon after it opened on its way downtown to the market and unloaded what the boy had ordered the evening before. Tom quickly figured out the retail prices and told the girl what they were. His first customer came from one of the tenants of the building next door, and his first sale was a quart of milk and half a dozen eggs. A dozen people had traded

with him before he was ready to start out on his rounds. He hired a boy to circulate hand bills announcing that he had opened up a family grocery on the corner of Union avenue and Taylor street. These bills announced two or three low-priced articles as leaders to draw custom to the store. Tom called on all his regular customers that morning, and on the promise of an afternoon delivery recovered that portion of their trade that he had lost. He also canvassed a number of new people and caught several of them. He got back to the store about noon and found that Jessie Jarvis had done considerable business during his absence. She had brought her lunch with her, as she could not very well go home and return, and she ate it while Tom was employed in filling his orders and in waiting on an occasional customer.

When she had taken her half hour he started her on his orders and went to dinner himself at a restaurant in the neighborhood. As soon as his orders had been made up and checked off he loaded them on his wagon and started out to make his deliveries. He finished up about five, canvassed some more new people, and reached the store at six. He merely looked in to see how things had been going during the afternoon. Miss Jarvis' report was satisfactory and he left for home. He put up his rig on the way and reached the cottage a little before seven. Bob and his mother were eating their supper.

"You're just in time, Tom," said Bob. "Well, how did things go to-day?"

"First-class," replied Tom enthusiastically. "It is a great thing to have a line of customers, like I have, to open up with. It starts the ball rolling right off the reel. People have been dropping in off and on all day, attracted by my circulars and the fact that my store is nearer to them than my own rival in the neighborhood. The bulk of my business, however, comes from the customers I drummed up for Brown, Jones & Co. It took me the best part of the afternoon to deliver my orders, and everybody paid up."

After supper Tom took Bob to the store with him, and as it was close on to eight, the girl put on her things and went home. Bob suggested that Tom put in a small line of tobacco and cigars, as the nearest cigar store was three blocks away. Tom agreed that it would be a good idea, and he said he would adopt it. At half-past nine Tom closed up for the night and he and Bob went home. He was greatly pleased with the result of his first day's business, and he expected to be doing considerably better by the end of the week. He was not disappointed in this, for his hustling tactics captured many new customers that week, and his prompt delivery satisfied his regular people. So the week passed and Tom was obliged to send an order to Mr. Day for a fresh supply of certain goods. There was no doubt that his store was a great success, and that he had quite overshadowed his business rival a block away. He blocked the man's efforts to extend his trade to any great extent. The groceryman, Gubbins by name, who had been drawn to Rockland by Timothy Martin's advertisement and who had expected to have the whole field to himself for a while to come, called on his wholesaler and registered a kick. Of course he couldn't deny that Tom Truesdale or anybody else had the right to

open up a grocery in the district if he chose, but he couldn't understand how Tom had started off with so much custom, and he was mad because the boy had already cut into the trade he had picked up himself. He thought that Martin, having induced him to come to Rockland, ought to help him out.

Martin was ready to do that if he could, for he suspected that Wm. B. Day, his business rival, had started in to imitate his tactics of establishing stores to push his specialties. He believed that Tom was being backed by Day in the same way that he was backing half a dozen stores in Rockland. The first thing he did was to send a representative up to look at Tom's establishment, and see how much business he was doing. The man called on Saturday afternoon and finding Tom out, tried to pump Miss Jarvis. He learned a few things, but nothing that would in any way put him onto the boy's methods. He reported the results of his mission to Martin. The wholesaler was not greatly enlightened, but he decided that something must be done to drive the boy out of business. He sent another man up to the neighborhood to canvass for Gubbins and incidentally to give Tom's store a black eye. This man began his exertions on Monday, and on Tuesday Tom learned about him and what he was doing. Apparently the man was sent out by Gubbins, his rival. He offered special inducements to Tom's customers to come over to Gubbins' store and trade, by cutting the prices on Martin's specialties. Tom hurried down to First street and had an interview with Mr. Day. He told that gentleman that his rival was offering the Martin goods at a price that was going to hurt him unless he could meet them. Day listened to him, asked him how he was doing so far, and learning that he was getting on fine, he told Tom to meet all cuts and go a bit lower if he thought it well to do so and he would back him up.

"Martin is at the back of that cut," he said, "otherwise the new man could not afford to make such reckless reductions. As Martin has taken a hand in the interest of his man, it is only fair to you that I should step in and meet him with his own weapons. Keep me informed about how things are going on, and you can depend on me right along. I admire your nerve and your business abilities, and I am going to see that you have a fair show."

"Thank you, sir. With a little help from you, I am not afraid but I can hold my own and push ahead," said Tom.

He stopped at the printer's and ordered a new hand-bill to be printed on the rush. He hired a boy as soon as they were delivered and flooded the district with them, going Gubbins one better. He had lost some customers, but he got them back again and several of Gubbins' to boot.

Gubbins, who had been encouraged by the backing he got from Martin, saw one of the circulars and had a fit. He decided to make a cut on butter as a leader and sell it at cost. That ought to bring in customers. He painted a sign on brown paper and stuck it on a board outside of his door, announcing the cut. The kid who had delivered the bills for Tom saw it and told him about it. The boy grocer immediately got out a

sign himself and put his price a cent lower than Gubbins. He also reduced the price of eggs two cents. People who bought butter of Gubbins told others about the reduction, only to learn that they could have got it still cheaper at the Truesdale store. The result was Gubbins' cut proved a boomerang, and he lost more than he had expected to gain by it. People who liked the boy grocer better, personally, because he jollied them up on his rounds and acted just like a friend, retailing the latest news to them, rushed to Tom's store instead of Gubbins', and the Martin man tore his hair when he heard about it. He was forced to reduce the price of his eggs to meet Tom's cut, but he wouldn't go lower. Although both parties to the rivalry were practically losing money on many of their more important articles, Tom had by far the better of the fight, as he had twice the trade Gubbins had, and he was making his usual profit on the majority of the standard goods he sold, the prices of which were not cut by either rival. The volume of his profit being larger, he was doing well on the average, while Gubbins was not. His hustling methods were hurting Gubbins like fun. If Gubbins had gone out himself and canvassed for business, he would have had a greater chance of equalizing the fight for the control of the district. But he was essentially an inside man. He had been accustomed to depend on printer's ink alone, and had learned the business in a store at Portland, where the boss never went out looking for custom. He didn't seem to understand that conditions in a new district, where grocery stores were scarce, were different from a district where stores were numerous and business was carried on in a stereotyped way. Then he was not bucking against a dyed-in-the-wool rival of his own kind, but against a boy who was working along original and up-to-date lines, untrammelled by regular methods in vogue among ordinary grocers. Tom's tactics were largely at variance with the usual grocery methods. They fitted in very well with that particular district, though they might have failed in a congested neighborhood. Tom was entirely an outside hustler—a born salesman. He could have sold anything to the right parties. His attractive and cheerful ways made him popular with his customers as fast as he got them. In dealing with him they felt as if they were trading with a person in which they had a certain interest. Only the people who called at Gubbins' store knew what he looked like, and as he had a grouch on all the time over Tom's success, he did not produce a favorable impression on his customers. Tom had a way of taking people into his confidence that attracted them. They liked to be invited to give their opinion on this and that. In fact, two-thirds of Tom's customers looked forward to his daily visit as a feature of the day. He lost little time with them, as he had the knack of suddenly excusing himself as soon as he had registered their order, and at the same time giving them the impression that he was sorry to part from them. In a word, Tom had the Indian sign on Gubbins so fast that unless something out of the ordinary happened in the groceryman's favor his finish was merely a matter of time, and not so long at that.

CHAPTER X.—An Alluring Proposition.

At the end of the third week of Tom's career in his own business he was getting on swimmingly. He had been compelled to hire a boy to deliver hurry orders close by. Miss Jarvis, in place of being a mere clerk, had practically become its manager. Customers calling at the store, except in the evening, rarely saw Tom, who was out all the time. The girl was cashier as well as saleswoman, and had full swing with the cash drawer, but Tom had the utmost confidence in her honesty and loyalty to his interests, and therefore trusted her fully. She proved herself the one girl fitted to help him through the troubled waters of his start. If he had had an assistant made especially to his order, he could not have improved on Jessie Jarvis, who was a little business woman from the ground floor up. She liked the responsibility that lay on her young shoulders, and was proud of the confidence he reposed in her.

"You're a jewel, Jennie," Tom told her one day, "and I'm not paying you half what you are worth, but I can't afford to give you more at this stage of the game. I'll make it up to you by and by if you will trust to my honor. I started this business on my nerve and consequently have more to buck against, but I'm going to win out. You and my friend Bob are standing by me like majors, and I appreciate it more than I can tell you."

The way he spoke won the girl closer to his interests. To say the truth, she was more than half in love with him, for he was not only a good-looking fellow, but his fascinating way and conversation had captured her completely, and what she wasn't willing to do for him is hardly worth mentioning, from which fact the reader will see that Tom had the Indian sign on her, as he had on his rival and on his customers as well. Gubbins had gained nothing from the help Martin gave him and in a rage at the state of affairs he made another call on his wholesaler.

"That boy is doing me up," he said.

"Pooh!" retorted Martin, who, being a fighter himself, expected Gubbins to show a good front, too. "Are you going to let a boy run you out?"

"But he is carrying everything before him. He has canvassed the neighborhood for blocks around and has the people tied to him like a lot of fools. If I reduce the price on anything, he goes me one better, and the people give me the laugh. My errand boy says everybody is stuck on Truesdale, though what they see about him I can't make out. Something has got to be done or I'll go out of business."

"You're selling my specialties at rock-bottom figures and I'm not making a cent on them, yet your orders are coming in mighty slow," said Martin aggressively. "Why don't you get a hustle on? I thought you knew how to run the grocery business. That boy seems to have you beaten a mile. What good are you to me if you don't sell my goods? I didn't bring you here to have you go to sleep. Get out and canvass for trade, like your rival. If you don't, I'll look for another man and start him up in the next block. I can't afford to let the Day specialties get ahead

of mine. I had the inner track till this boy came on the field."

"That's a nice way to talk. You've got \$500 of my capital. You ought to help me out."

"I'm ready to help you all I can, but the burden is on you."

"Can't we do that boy up some way?" asked Gubbins. "You are a man of importance in town. You're acquainted with politicians. Put up a job on him."

"Look here, Gubbins, I have a reputation, and I can't afford to take chances with it. If you want to try underhand tricks, do them yourself. But it seems to me that you don't amount to much if you can't buck against a live boy."

On the whole, Gubbins' interview with Martin was unsatisfactory to him. The wholesaler cared nothing for Tom except as a pawn in his rivalry with Mr. Day, nor for Gubbins except as an instrument to advance his own interests. If he had not been interested in the game he would have admired the young fellow's methods, which jibed with his own. He was willing to strain a point to help Gubbins out, but he did not choose to let the groceryman think that he would adopt any methods that were not strictly regular. Timothy Martin was a shrewd business man, and he never took any desperate chances, but still he did things that Mr. Day would scorn to be guilty of.

"That young groceryman is certainly making things hot for Gubbins," he said to himself, after the departure of his customer. "I'll have to take a hand and round him up. Gubbins isn't worth powder enough to blow him to Jericho. He is a disappointment to me. Too bad I didn't get hold of Truesdale myself. I could have done wonders with such a chap. I wonder how Day ran across him? Luck, I suppose. The first move I'd better make is to send my manager to sound the boy and see if I can't win him over from Day. If I can do that, he'll make a raft of money for himself and me, too. To capture him would be to give Day a blow in the solar-plexus, so to speak. In that case, Gubbins can go to blazes. I'll return him his \$500 and let him hunt cover. That boy could run both stores just as well as not, and a third, for that matter, to keep any other comer from butting in. The northern section is my meat, and I'm going to control it or know the reason why not."

He sent for his manager and had a confidential talk with him.

"Find out where the boy lives and call on him Sunday," Mr. Black. "Make him the proposition I outlined to you, but be careful to feel your way first. I don't want him to go to Day and tell him I am trying to buy him off. We must have a little honor in trade, even if we are cutting each other's prices."

"I'll be cautious, Mr. Martin," said the manager.

"See that you are. Report to me on Monday," said the wholesaler, dismissing his head man.

Mr. Martin's manager found out that Tom lived with the Bradleys at 182 Prospect street, and he called at the cottage on Sunday afternoon. Tom was in and the visitor was shown into the little parlor. When the boy came in the manager introduced himself as a small capitalist who had a project in view that he hoped would interest Tom. He began by saying that he had been watching

the boy since he opened up his grocery store, and he was satisfied he was the lad for his money. His object was to establish a chain of groceries in the northern section, and he wanted a wide-awake hustler to take charge of the bunch as manager, with a partnership interest. He said that as a beginning he proposed to buy out Gubbins and turn the store over to Tom to run. Later on he would furnish the capital to start a third store, and so on.

"It's quite a scheme, sir, but I'm not sure that I care to go in with you. I'm doing very well as things are and the trust business is not wholly to my liking. I like to be my own boss, accountable to no one for my methods and actions. I can do better under those conditions."

"I see you are dealing entirely in the Day specialties. Is that gentleman backing you?" asked the visitor.

"No, sir. He simply has given me easy terms of credit."

"I should think you would have done better to have gone into the Martin goods. They go better with the class of customers you are catering to."

"I think the Day specialties are the best—the fact that the best people in town prefer them is some evidence of that fact—and I am educating my customers in the Day lines, and they are taking to them like ducks to water."

Mr. Black frowned.

"But you would make more money out of the Martin goods," said the visitor.

"Then should you try to establish a chain of stores in the northern district of this town, you would deal in the Martin specialties instead of the Day specialties?"

"I admit that such would be my idea."

"Have you had an interview with Mr. Martin on the subject?"

"I confess that I did see him about it."

"Of course he is in favor of your project?"

"Naturally, since it is to his interest."

"Did he put you onto me?"

"Your name was mentioned as a new grocer in the northern section."

"I suppose he doesn't regard me with much favor, seeing as I am pushing the goods of his business rival."

"On the contrary, he thinks you are a particularly smart boy, and it was what he said about you as a hustler that led me to think you were just the person I required in my project."

"Why don't you see Gubbins, my business rival? He is wedded to the Martin specialties."

"He isn't the kind of man I would consider at all."

"But he is a man of long experience in the grocery business, while I'm only a boy with much to learn yet," smiled Tom.

"You have what he lacks—push, energy, and ambition. He's simply a storekeeper. The woods are full of those kind of men. Your talents are not confined by the four walls of your store—his are. I want an organizer—a person who can successfully conduct an enterprise of some magnitude."

"And you think I can do that?"

"I think you can do it by degrees. I'll give you a week to consider my proposition. The only

condition is that you turn down the Day goods and take up with the Martin stock. If you consent, in one week Gubbins will no longer be your rival. His store will be under your control. As the district fills up I will supply the backing for you to start a third store, and so on until the entire district is covered by the Truesdale stores."

"The Truesdale stores!" exclaimed Tom.

"Exactly. You will have a half interest in the whole business, and I will remain in the background—the silent partner of the trust."

"It ought to be called the Martin trust, for, according to your plan, his goods will dominate that part of town. The Day specialties will not be in it."

"What do you care? Day, you say, is nothing to you. Neither is Martin, for that matter, but by running a string of stores you'll be able to make extra good terms with Martin—better than you could do with Day?"

"How do you know that if it came to a showdown that Mr. Day wouldn't sell as cheap as Martin?"

"I don't know for a certainty, but the Martin goods are going to be the whole thing in a year from now."

"I doubt it. You say you'll give me a week to think your proposition over?"

Mr. Black nodded.

"Well, I don't want a week, nor an hour. I have given my word to sell the Day specialties at my store for one year, if I last that long. I can't go back on that. By that time the people will be so accustomed to the Day products that they won't care to change to the Martin goods. If you want to change front and back me up as a dispenser of Day instead of Martin, I'll talk the matter over with you; otherwise it is quite useless for you to waste your time with me."

"You're foolish, young man. Suppose I get somebody else to take charge of my project? I have plenty of capital, and I will be sure to swamp you."

"All right, sir. There is nothing to prevent you from trying if you want to. This is a free country, and you have the right to start as many grocery stores in the northern district as suits you, or you can afford to. Remember one thing, however, I am out for my rights and I'm going to have them. I came in after Gubbins and I've got him on the run. I guess you could buy him out cheap, from what I hear. Start in with his store as your opening wedge and see if you can run me and the Day goods out of the northern district. I should like to see you do it, for I thrive on opposition. Gubbins hasn't given me half a fight. Put your man in and let's have a rattling good scrap to the finish."

"You seem confident of winning."

"I'm confident that if you win, you'll know you've been doing something."

"Then I understand that you turn down my offer?"

"Yes, unless you flop over to the Day side."

"You talk as if you were a partner of the Day interests."

"I'm not. On my word of honor, I have no interest in pushing the Day specialties except for my own profit. If I had thought that the Martin goods were the better of the two, I'd have taken

them up and stuck to them just as I am sticking to his rival's, as long as he gave me a fair deal."

"Well, I see there is no use talking further on the subject," said the visitor, rising. "I am sorry I can't do business with you. Perhaps you will see that you have made a mistake in refusing my proposition. If then you desire to change your mind, a letter sent to that address will reach me. Good afternoon!"

"Good-afternoon!" said Tom, showing him out.

He watched his visitor walk up the street.

"I'll bet nine dollars to a doughnut that Martin sent him to me to buy me off. Martin is a wise guy, and Gubbins has told him that I am running his goods out of the new district. He sees that Gubbins is a failure when up against me. He offers me a glowing inducement to come into his camp and push his goods in place of Day's. Well, he hasn't got money enough in his bank to buy me, though I'm a mile from being on Easy Street. My word is passed to Mr. Day, and for one year at least I shall sink or swim in his service."

CHAPTER XI.—An Attempt at Robbery.

Pretty well convinced that he had a fight on his hands with Martin, Tom got a renewed hustle on the following week and he got a dozen of Gubbins' customers away from him before Saturday. In the meanwhile several things happened. The first was an attempt to lure Jessie Jarvis away from the store. She was offered a better job at higher wages if she would leave Tom at short notice. The tempter didn't know how loyal and true the girl was to her young employer or he wouldn't have made her the offer. He found out, however, and went away disappointed. On Wednesday a gang of rowdies gathered about the store and made things unpleasant for Miss Jarvis and any customer who entered. In the midst of the trouble Tom drove up. The boys didn't know him, and as there was no sign on the wagon they didn't suppose that it had any connection with the store. They woke up to trouble when Tom jumped out and grabbing two of them by the arms bumped their heads together and hauled them bodily into the store. Holding them tight prisoners, Tom heard Jessie's story of the annoyance which, she said, had been going on for half an hour.

"Now, you young rascals," said Tom, "who sent you here to annoy me?"

"Aw, who's annoyin' yer?" snarled one of the boys.

"Are you going to answer me?"

"Nobody sent us."

"All right, then, you will go to jail for creating a disturbance in front of my store. Telephone for an officer, Miss Jarvis."

The boys kicked and struggled, but they could not break Tom's strong hold. Then they wilted and said that a man had sent them.

"Who was the man?"

"Dunno. I never seen him before. He gave us each half a dollar to raise a rumpus around here."

"Well, unless you can spot the man, you've got to take the consequences. Get a piece of line, Billy," he said to his errand boy.

Billy brought the line and the two boys were bound together and pushed into a corner.

"Keep your eyes on them, Billy," said Tom.

The rest of the gang had retreated to the opposite side of the way. When Tom came to the door to see where they had gone, they flung cat-calls and bad language at him and one, more daring than the rest, launched a stone at one of his windows. Tom caught it on the fly and started for them. The bunch took to their heels. Tom threw the stone into their midst and hit one of them on the leg. He fell, and before he could get up Tom was on top of him. Yanking him to his feet, the young storekeeper cuffed him till he yelled for mercy. Then Tom dragged him into the store and tied him up, too. When the policeman came, Tom told him the story of the outrage and ordered him to arrest the boys.

"We'll dump them into my wagon and take them to the police station," he said, "and I'll make the charge against them."

This was done and the three boys were locked up and Tom promised to appear against them next day. At the appointed time Tom left the store in charge of Billy and took Jessie to court with him. The boys' parents were in the court to try and get them off. Tom told the magistrate that the boys had been incited by some party unknown to annoy him and hurt his business. Jessie testified to the trouble, saying that the crowd had refused to leave when she ordered them to. The boys, in their own defense, stated that they had been hired by a stranger to act as they had done. They didn't know who the man was. They were sentenced to thirty days in the house of correction and their folks set up a howl, but it didn't do any good. Tom and Jessie returned to the store.

As the mornings grew longer, Tom had to get to his store at six o'clock in order to meet the farm wagon. When Jessie came at half-past seven he went home to breakfast and on his way back got his rig from the stable. On Saturday morning of that week he woke an hour earlier than usual without knowing it and reached the store at five instead of six. As he came up Taylor street he saw the head of a horse standing in front of his store. He knew it could not be the farm wagon that was there, for there was only a single horse and the animal was headed in the wrong direction. It struck him that something was wrong, so he approached the corner with some caution. Glancing around the corner, he saw a man standing up in the wagon. Looking through the side window, he saw that the door of the store was open and a man was carrying a bundle over one shoulder and dragging another to the door. Leaving the latter at the door, the man started for the wagon with the other.

"Here! What are you rascals up to?" cried Tom, suddenly springing out from the shelter of the corner and pouncing on the fellow who was carrying the bag of plunder, floored him with a heavy blow. The man in the wagon snatched up a stick and aimed a blow at Tom. It fell short of reaching him, and the stick, slipping out of his hand, hit the curb with a rattling sound. Tom snatched it up and knocked the other chap down again as he was trying to scramble to his feet. The man in the wagon had made a motion to spring out, but when he saw the way Tom han-

died his companion he reconsidered the matter. Tom dragged the fallen man to the door of the store and told him if he did not lie quiet he would treat him to another crack on the nut.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked the boy.

"Turn you over to the police as a thief."

"I'm not a thief."

"No? And you have carried two bagfuls of my property out of the store, intending to carry it away on that wagon. What kind of business do you call that?"

"We were paid to do it."

"Oh, come now, don't give me such a song and dance as that!"

"It's the truth. We were paid to rob your store of some of your stock so as to put you in a hole," said the man.

"Who hired you to do that? Identify him and I'll let you go."

The prisoner didn't know who the man was, but he described him, and the likeness was identical with that given by the boys who had been sent to the house of correction. Tom began to believe the story the man told him. "I believe your story," said Tom, "but that doesn't let you out of the hole you've put yourself into. Your companion has driven off and deserted you, leaving you to go to jail with the charge of burglary hanging over your head."

"Are you going to have me arrested?" asked the man.

"As sure as you lie there I am."

"I've a wife and four children who will starve if I go to jail."

"You should have considered the chances you were taking before you went into your crooked act."

"I needed money."

"That's no excuse. You could get honest work, couldn't you?"

"I haven't been able to get anything to do."

"If you could expose the man who, you say, induced you to undertake this job, I'd be willing to let up on you, but since you can't, you've got to suffer the consequences."

"I'd know him again if I saw him. Let me go and I'll try and hunt him up for you."

"No, I couldn't think of it. I'm going to put a detective on his track and hold you in jail for your crime. If the man is caught, and you will testify against him, I'll try and get you off."

At that moment the farm wagon came rattling down the avenue. It drew up in front of the store and the driver leaped down. He was surprised to find the young storekeeper standing over a man and keeping him in subjection with a club. Tom explained the situation.

"Have you got a piece of rope in your wagon?" asked the boy.

"Yes," replied the driver.

"Get it and we'll secure this fellow."

In a few minutes the burglar was bound and marched into the store.

"Watch him while I telephone to the police station," said Tom.

Tom communicated with the police and an officer was presently on his way to take charge of the prisoner. The farm driver unloaded the stuff consigned to the young storekeeper and then

drove off. Shortly afterward the policeman arrived, handcuffed the burglar and walked him to the station house.

CHAPTER XII.—The Flopping of Gubbins.

Tom appeared at the police court at noon and testified against the burglar, who pleaded not guilty. He was held for trial and the incident was reported in the afternoon papers. Later on a stranger appeared before a judge and went bail for the man. Eventually the bail was forfeited, for the burglar failed to appear for trial. The detective who went out to look for the man answering the description furnished by the burglar, arrested a driver of one of the Martin trucks. When brought up for examination he indignantly denied his guilt. The burglar was hunted for to identify him, but he could not be found. At Tom's suggestion the three boys who had been sent to the house of correction were sent for and each of them identified the man as the person who had hired them to make trouble at Tom's store. Tom then made a charge of conspiracy against the prisoner and he was held on that. Martin's manager bailed him out afterward and he went back to his truck. Martin got in touch with political friends, and one of them sent an emissary to see the boys at the workhouse. A few days later the boys were released from the place. When the truck driver was put on trial and the boys were called as witnesses against him they unanimously declared that the prisoner was not the man who had hired them. The result was the truck driver was discharged from custody. Tom, however, was not deceived. He was satisfied that Martin had pulled the wires which saved his employee from punishment. And he was equally certain that the man had been employed in a roundabout way by Martin to do his grocery business up. Two months had now elapsed and Tom still held his grip on the northern section. Gubbins still held forth at his store, but he was barely holding his own. Tom had made a first payment to Mr. Day, though that gentleman, satisfied that the boy was making a gallant fight for himself and in the interests of the Day specialties, told him he could take his own time in making payments on his original stock. Tom paid for all subsequent orders on the thirty-day basis, which was considered cash, and he got the lowest discounts in consequence. Mr. Day was so well pleased with his hustling methods that he assured Tom he was ready to back him with a cash loan any time he wanted it.

Tom accepted his offer to the amount of what he still owed on his initial stock, and gave his note at six months to cover it. That relieved him of all anxiety, for he knew the note would be renewed either in whole or in part when it became due, if he couldn't settle it. Although Tom had started his business on his nerve, and made a game fight for the first two months on his nerve, he now had the backing of his wholesaler, for Mr. Day regarded it essentially to his interests to support the boy, if necessary. The fight was really between Day and Martin for the control of the northern district in the interest of their specialties. Only for Tom's aggressive tac-

ties and attractive personality the Day goods would not have had a show, and Mr. Day had woke up to that fact.

Martin, disgusted with Gubbins, had started another man in business on the other side of Tom's store, that is, in the block above. This new storekeeper, coached by Martin, was making a good bid for trade, but he found it hard to buck against the boy. The cutting of prices between Tom and Gubbins had ceased to a great extent, for the boy had such a grip on his customers that a cut did Gubbins no good. If he scaled down on butter, or sugar, or eggs, Tom let him do it. People rushed to Gubbins' store and bought those articles, but nothing else.

In a day or two Gubbins had to go back to the regular price, and then the people bought those things off Tom, for they knew they could always depend on the quality of his goods, whereas some of Gubbins' cut-rate stuff had been clearly of inferior quality. The new grocer in the block above had the advantage of Gubbins, inasmuch as he was wholly backed by Martin, and had orders to cut the Martin goods below cost to try and reach Tom's limit. Tom, backed by Day, was able to meet any cut made, and so the fight went merrily on, with Gubbins getting the short end of everything. One evening Tom was surprised to see Gubbins walk into his store.

"Can I have a private talk with you, Truesdale?" asked his first rival.

"Certainly, Mr. Gubbins. Come this way. Bob, look after things, will you?"

Tom and Gubbins walked to the end of the store.

"Truesdale, I'm going to sell out if I can and throw up my hands. You're the smartest boy I've ever run across, and you've had my number from the first. I've done my best to beat you, with such help as I could get from Martin, who established me on my capital of \$1,000. He got \$500 of it, and the rest went as working capital and the expense of fitting up the place. I agreed to push his specialties, of course, and I thought I would have a clear field. Then you started up in opposition with the Day specialties, which you had been canvassing in the district before I started, and you opened up your store. I didn't learn that till later. Martin has started a new man to try and beat you and has thrown me down. He allows him a free hand and lets him sell his specialties below cost. You have met the cut because your wholesaler is probably backing you up so that you can hold the advantage you have gained. Martin won't give me the same chance. I have to pay his regular price and, of course, I can't go low enough to keep the few customers I have. I must go to the wall, and that's all there is to it."

"I'm sorry for you, Gubbins. I suppose I'm the cause of your failure, but under the circumstances I had to fight you. You began cutting prices on me and I retaliated. I got most of your customers because I went after them and convinced them that my goods were superior to yours. If you had been able to meet me on the same ground you'd have given me trouble, but you're not an outside hustler, while I am. You are a good man to attend store, and if the people would come to you, you'd succeed all right. You

were up against a live boy, however, and as soon as I got on to your methods I saw your finish," said Tom.

"I'd like to get square with Martin if I could," said Gubbins. "He is waiting for me to go up, and then he intends to put another man in my store and push the fight against you. He figures that he will have you between two fires. If he hadn't soured on me, you'd see me advertising his specialties and other things at the same figure the new man in the block above is doing. I don't know whether he's hurting you much or not, but with two of us on the job, we might. As soon as I get out, there will be two on the job unless you take up with my offer."

"What's your offer?" asked Tom.

"Buy me out. I'll sell cheap. Run my store yourself and that will block Martin's scheme of putting what he calls a live man in my place. I'll admit that he has made me an offer to get out. He has offered me \$500. I'd sooner take \$400 from you than oblige him. He has insulted me several times and it would be worth \$100, or even more, to me to get back at him. What do you say—will you give me \$350 cash?"

"Do you really want to quit?"

"I've got to whether I want to or not."

"Look here, Gubbins, if you want to get back at Martin, and at the same time help yourself, I can point out a better way than your offer."

"What is it?"

"Come over on my side of the fence and fight Martin. I don't want your store, but I'll take it sooner than let it fall into Martin's hands. If I close with you at your price I'll be down and out. Now suppose you agree to throw out Martin's specialties and push Day's goods in place of them. I'll get Mr. Day to make good terms with you till you can get on your feet. I'll agree to quit calling on all the customers I have below President street in your neighborhood. I'll give you their names and you can go around and canvass them. They won't want to continue with me if I notify them that I can't deliver below President street after the end of the month, and when you tell them that you are selling the same goods I am at the same prices, you'll get them as customers. I'll do this for you with the understanding that you will do the fighting against Martin below President street. That will leave me free to carry on the battle against the new man, who is right in the heart of my own territory. How does the idea strike you?"

Gubbins jumped at the proposition.

"I'll take you up. We'll stand in together against Martin," he said, rubbing his hands. "If you get pushed, I'll help you out. Martin told me that you're as smart as a steel trap. I heard him say that if he had you he'd control two-thirds of the town within a year and leave Day only his aristocratic trade. You and me can force the new man out if Day will back us both, and then you can start a new store further up and that will settle Martin. Your plan is fine. It will give me a chance to establish myself, and you needn't be afraid that I will prove ungrateful. I always stand by a friend. If Martin had treated me square, I would still be in the fight against you. As he had thrown me over, I am now against him."

"All right, Gubbins. I'll take you down to see

Mr. Day to-morrow after dinner. As soon as you make arrangements with him, get your remains of the Martin stuff out in front of your store and offer it at any price to get rid of it. Send hand-bills out all around your district below President street headed, 'Selling Out Below Cost.' You will mean the Martin specialties, which you will announce only on your bills, but the people will think you're going out of business and will flock to your store. Then you can tell them that hereafter you intend to deal in the Day specialties at the same price I offer them. That will be low as long as the fight with Martin's man goes on. When we have beaten him then we raise the prices to the regular standard."

Gubbins returned to his store tickled to death. To get in with his smart young rival meant a whole lot to him, and to get even with Martin was joy to his soul. Next day, Tom took him to see Mr. Day. Tom explained the new situation and asked the wholesaler to give Gubbins a chance.

"With Gubbins pushing your goods below President street, and me carrying on the fight against Martin's new man, in a short time Martin will be out of it," said Tom.

"Will you sign a year's agreement to handle only my goods, Mr. Gubbins?" asked Day of the groceryman.

"I'll sign anything you want, and I'll agree to help Truesdale, too, if he wants any help," said Gubbins. "He is treating me white, and I appreciate it."

So the arrangement was made and another spoke was put in Martin's wheel.

CHAPTER XIII.—Martin Gets in Both Feet.

Timothy Martin had no suspicion that Gubbins had flopped over to his rival. Jake Gruber, his new man, got hold of one of Gubbins' "Selling Out-Below-Cost" hand-bills and sent it to him, with the remark that he guessed Gubbins was going out of business. Martin grinned when he got it, and proceeded to communicate with another groceryman he had on a string. As soon as Gubbins threw up the lease of his store he intended to take it for the new party.

He sent word to Gruber to keep tab on Gubbins and let him know when the latter was putting up his shutters for good. Gruber put his errand boy on the job. In the meantime Tom recollected that he had not heard from his uncle, Peter White, with respect to the stock alleged to have been purchased by his mother before her death. When Sunday came he rode out with Bob to see Mr. White on the subject. The farmer was far from pleased to see him. He declared that he had not been able to find the stock.

"It's no good, anyway," he said.

"It doesn't make any difference whether it's good or not, it belongs to me and I want it. I'm out for my rights and that is part of them. If you don't find that stock inside of twenty-four hours I'll put the matter in the hands of a lawyer."

Tom's tone showed that he meant business, and

Farmer White, for reasons of his own, showed considerable trepidation.

"I don't want no lawyer to come bothering me," he whined.

"Then come up with the stock," said Tom.

"But I can't come up with it. It's lost."

"Is it? Then I'll put a lawyer on the job to-morrow and he will make you tell him all the particulars. I have reached my limit with you, Uncle Peter. You turned me down cold about four months ago, thinking you could skin me out of my wages. You did not skin me worth a cent. Now, you won't skin me out of that stock. I'm in business and doing well, and so I'm able to make you toe the mark. You will hear from my lawyer in a day or two."

As Tom got up to go, the old man wilted. He confessed that Tom's mother had not left any worthless stock, but \$1,500 in money, which he had used to buy an addition to his farm. If Tom would give him time he would pay him the money in instalments.

"Upon my word, you're a nice uncle, you are," said Tom, in a tone of disgust.

"I needed the money, nephew, and I meant to return it to you some day."

"How much can you pay on account right away?"

After hemming and hawing, Mr. White said he could pay \$500.

"Very good. Bring it to me at my store to-morrow, with your note at six months for the balance. Here is my business card," said Tom.

"Are you in the grocery business?" said the farmer, in surprise.

"What did you think I was in?"

"I had no idea you were in anything."

"Well, you see I am. Now don't forget. If you aren't there before dark I'll start a lawyer after you."

"I'll be there, nephew."

"Never heard from that money you lost, I suppose?"

"No," said the farmer. "That was a terrible loss."

"And you had the nerve to say that I put the burglars on to you."

"I didn't meant it. How did you get the money to go into the grocery business?"

"I went in on my nerve and the \$235 you paid me that Sunday."

"You must have had more'n that. It would take at least \$1,000 to go into any business."

"That's all you know about it. You're a farmer and you don't understand what a little nerve, backed by hustle and sundry other qualities, will do for a person in a town or city. You did me a great favor by bouncing me off the farm, but you didn't mean to do it, so I'm under no obligation to you. Well, good-by! Show up to-morrow, or you'll hear from me."

With that, Tom took his leave.

"Say, Bob," said Tom, as they started home, "what do you think? My uncle lied to me about that stock. When I pinned him down to handing it over he admitted that my mother left \$1,500 in money instead of worthless stock."

"Is that so?" said Bob in surprise.

"So he says now. He used it to pay for an addition to his farm."

"Gee! What a nerve! Used your money without your permission and intended to keep it, I suppose."

"Apparently that was his plan, but I spoiled it by threatening to hire a lawyer to get my right for me. He's going to pay me \$500 to-morrow, and the balance of it in six months."

"That will be quite a lift for you in your business."

"Bet your life it will! It couldn't come at a better time."

The conversation then changed to another topic. Next morning he read in the paper that two crooks, named Jack Nipper and Barney Galvin, had been caught burglarizing a house in the suburbs of Rockland.

Mr. White brought the \$500 next day and his note for the balance due Tom. He was astonished to see what a fine business Tom had.

"You must be pretty smart, nephew," he said.

"It's about time you found that out, Uncle Peter. If you want to buy any groceries to take back with you I'll let you have them at a discount, though you don't deserve such consideration from me," said Tom.

Mr. White bought about \$5 worth and Tom knocked off his retail profit.

"I'll come in again when I need more, nephew," said the farmer, tickled at the idea of getting his groceries cheap.

Mr. White finally drove off, saying he would call at the station-house and see if he could identify the men; if he could he would prosecute them, too. Gubbins' "Selling Out-at-Cost" sale only lasted as long as the Martin goods remained on his hands, which was not long at the prices he let them go for. Then he sent in his order for Day specialties, and when they arrived he put up a big sign announcing that hereafter he would sell those goods as cheap as any grocer in the neighborhood. Gruber's boy saw the sign and reported the fact to his boss. Gruber was astonished and walked down to Gubbin's store to verify the fact.

"I thought you were going out of business, Gubbins?" he said.

"Well, you've got another think coming. I'm going to stay right here as long as I please," grinned Gubbins.

"Have you gone back on Martin?" said Gruber, somewhat surprised.

"I have, after he went back on me first."

"He'll be as mad as thunder when I tell him you have thrown him down."

"That for Martin!" cried Gubbins, snapping his fingers. "He's got no use for me, so I've no use for him or his specialties."

Gruber took his departure, and next morning called on Martin with the news.

"What!" roared the wholesaler. "Do you mean to tell me that Gubbins has gone over to Day?"

"He's got a big sign out, advertising the Day goods."

"And he isn't going out of business?"

"Doesn't look much like it now," said Gruber.

"The scoundrel!" snorted Martin. "And it was me that started him up."

"He says you went back on him, and now he's got no use for you or your specialties."

"Very well, we shall see. Is there a store to rent close to him?"

"Yes, one three doors away."

"Good! I'll take it, put a man in and run the scoundrel out of business."

Martin called his manager into his room and had a talk with him, during which he roundly denounced Gubbins. Shortly afterward the manager went to the northern district and rented the store near Gubbins' place. A few days later it opened up as a grocery store, with a big sign advertising Martin's specialties and a full assortment of choice goods. The price of the specialties were put down to cost, and many standard articles were marked low. Gubbins had a fit when he understood the situation, and he rushed over to Tom's store that evening to tell him what was on the tapis.

"My!" cried Tom, "if matters get much hotter the people will be able to buy their groceries for next to nothing."

"I'll have to cut my prices still lower to meet this opposition," said Gubbins. "If I don't I won't have any trade at all. Martin's man has flooded the neighborhood with hand-bills advertising his low prices. Martin put him there to run me out because I flopped over to Day, and he'll keep him there until he does me up. I can't buck against a wealthy man like him."

"I'll notify Mr. Day," said Tom. "This kind of business is ruinous to all hands. The people from the south side will come over to buy their groceries as soon as they get wind of the state of affairs. That will hurt the local dealers there. We'll be called sharks, pirates and what not. I'm afraid it will be tough on you particularly, Gubbins, for your trade is so small. As for me, I'll give Martin all the fight he wants. I've got the trade and I'm going to hold on to it if I have to give my stuff away until Martin gets tired of the game."

"Do you think Day will help me out?" asked Gubbins, anxiously.

"Sure he will, for the fight is practically between him and Martin. He'll see us through, and he can easily afford to do it. One thing is certain, Martin can't interfere with his high-toned trade. Martin is simply out for this new district. He's determined to get it if he can, and the only way he can do it is to get you and me out. If I hadn't butted in in the first place he'd have had it, for Day was making no bid for it. I have interested Day and thereby drawn him into the fight. He is gritty enough to stick it out, I guess."

Tom called on Day on the following noon to acquaint him with Martin's latest move.

"I'll support Gubbins," said the wholesaler, "but it means a loss to me. Still if Martin can afford to make such extensive cuts, I can. This latest action on his part is directed solely at Gubbins because he took up with my goods. He probably does not propose to extend it to his other store above you."

Tom stopped in at Gubbins on his way back and told him that Day would do all he could to help him out.

CHAPTER XIV —Conclusion.

The people of the northern section could read with some complacency in the papers about the high cost of living as long as they could buy

their groceries at the prices asked at the four rival stores. Tom met the new Martin rates and, of course, Gruber was obliged to follow suit. In the course of two weeks Martin realized that he wasn't making much headway in his revenge on Gubbins, and none at all against Tom. That made him madder than ever. There could be no doubt in his mind now that Day was going to see both Gubbins and Truesdale through at any cost. He cudgelled his brains for some other plan, and finally called on the political leader of the northern district, with whom he was on friendly terms, and placed the case before him.

"Very well. I'll speak to my war captains and if they think they can do anything to help you I'll have them do it, but it's rather a delicate matter. The party voters are about evenly divided in my district, and I can't do anything at all with the opposition," said the leader.

A week after this conversation Tom learned from many of his customers that they had been approached by the ward captains and the suggestion thrown out that they would find it to their interest to trade with Gruber instead of Truesdale. That made Tom angry. Martin had resorted to politics to help him out. So he called at the Martin wholesale house and sent in his name. Martin was somewhat surprised, and wondered whether the boy was weakening. Tom walked in and lost no time in stating the object of his visit. He asked Martin what he meant by resorting to underhand tactics.

"Don't imagine that I'm afraid of you, Mr. Martin, because I'm not," said Tom, aggressively. "I know the respect that is due a gentleman of your years and standing in the community, but when you resort to such methods as politics to do me up you are lowing yourself in the estimation of the public."

"How dare you come here and chastise me, young man?" roared Martin.

"Boy," he said, hoarsely, "there isn't a man in town that would dare come here and talk to me as you have just done. It is clear to me that you are utterly fearless. Look here. I'll make you a proposition. I'll give you \$5,000 cash to come in with me, and I'll give you a half interest in all the stores I start in the northern district."

"You couldn't buy me for a million, Mr. Martin. If you want to do a sensible thing you will call the fight off all around. You'll close up your new store close to Gubbins and direct Gruber to restore prices on your goods to the normal. I will do the same, and so will Gubbins. You might as well understand now that you never can control the northern section. At present I control it. I've got the majority of the families with me. I've won them through sheer hustle, and I mean to keep them by giving them honest goods at an honest price. I don't believe in price cutting. You've lost money since you started in through Gubbins and you are losing more trying to do him up. You've also caused Mr. Day to lose in proportion, but I haven't lost to any great extent, for my general trade has carried me along. When I found out from some of my customers that political pressure was being brought to bear on them to make them take their trade away from me and turn it over to Gruber, I made up my mind that it was time for

me to take the bull by the horns and let the bull know that he was treading on dangerous ground. I am glad to know that no one political party controls this town, and that if there is a leaning in any direction it is not toward the party you are connected with. That gives me a fighting chance against your latest maneuver, and so if you go too far I may find an opening to haul you into court, which I assure you I will do if you force me to it. I have been out for my rights from the start, and it strikes me that I'll come pretty close to getting what's coming to me. I'd rather be on friendly terms with you and all men than otherwise, but the man who tries to sit on my neck has his work cut out."

Martin sat back in his chair during Tom's speech and glared at the boy. The aggressive wholesaler had met his match in the young storekeeper. Tom had finished his speech standing, with his hand on the knob of the door, ready to make his exit. As the last word left his lips a woman's scream rang through the building. Tom forgot Martin a moment, pulled open the door and looked out, while the wholesaler sprang to his feet. Just outside the door was the big freight elevator coming down slowly loaded with goods from an upper story. Some one had neglected to properly close the iron latticed gate that cut the space off from the store proper. It had parted in the middle to the extent of two feet and through this opening in some unaccountable manner a pretty, handsomely dressed girl of sixteen had slipped. As Tom sprang to the girl's aid, Timothy Martin filled the doorway of his private room. He staggered back with horror and consternation, for the imperiled one was his only daughter, Norah. Tom grabbed the girl under the armpits and lifted her out of the pit with a mighty effort of his strong, muscular arms, her skirt giving away like a piece of gauze. As her boots cleared the edge of the hole the huge elevator came flush with the floor and stopped. Martin, sweating blood almost, and holding on to the door to sustain his swaying figure, stared at the boy, who was holding his fainting daughter in his arms, while clerks were rushing up from half a dozen points. Then with a howl like a wounded bull he staggered forward and seized his child in his arms. Martin carried his daughter into his room where she soon revived. When he found she had escaped scot free he was wild with joy.

He knew that his aggressive young visitor had saved the girl's life, and he rushed out to find him and express his gratitude, but Tom had gone away. He sent a messenger at once to Tom's store to call him back. Tom, however, did not stop at his store, but went straight out among his customers, whom he had neglected that morning. That evening Martin walked in upon him.

"Truesdale," he said, grasping his hand, "you saved my child this morning. I can never express my gratitude sufficiently. From this moment I am your best friend, and the fight I've made against you is over. You have won out."

And so we end the story of the boy who was out for his rights, and got them.

Next week's issue will contain "AFTER THE LAST DOLLAR; or, THE WALL STREET BOY WHO SAVED HIS BOSS."

CURRENT NEWS

BURGLARS USE CHLORINE GAS

Not the least after result of the war is the increase in crime in nearly all the belligerent countries, but a group of French burglars have supplied the climax by using army poison gas projectors in order to silence watchdogs at isolated chateaux.

At Massy burglars left an empty chlorine tank and two gas masks after ransacking a farm house while the occupants slept in peaceful confidence. Two gas strangled hounds completed the picture, but there is little clue to the identity of the daring burglars.

As a result of this the French army has received orders to make an inventory of all gas apparatus on hand and to take strictest measures to prevent the disappearance of any of it.

CATFISH USED IN STREET CLEANING

In one of the towns of Oregon the familiar catfish figures as a hardy pioneer, and a valued adjunct to the street department, all because the terra cotta sewers and drains, especially those in the lower part of the town, frequently get choked.

If the sewer is not broken it can be cleaned by passing a rope through it to be pulled backward and forward until the obstruction is loosened and removed. The deputy superintendent of streets had a great deal of such work to look after, but at last he discovered a quick, sure and easy method.

He goes to the river, catches a catfish, ties a string to its tail, drops it down a manhole into the sewer, and it at once starts for the river and forces its way through any obstruction not as solid as brick, dragging the string after it. Then the deputy goes as far down the sewer as he deems necessary and picks up the string, which he uses to draw a wire through the sewer, and with this a rope is pulled through and the sewer is soon cleared.

TOLEDO SWORD FACTORY

In the famous sword factory at Toledo, in Spain, absolute secrecy surrounds some of the processes employed in the making of these celebrated blades, although under certain conditions visitors are allowed to go through the factory. No one, however, is permitted to look upon the final secrets of tempering.

In the first room there may be seen a curious large round shield fastened against the wall, where the last test of a finished sword is made. It is thrown against this target as an arrow is thrown from a bow. If its point is perfect, well and good; it does not turn a fraction of the finest hair's breadth. If the blade makes an escape from this trial, and it usually does, it is worthy to be marked with the royal sign and the word "Artileria," that proves that it was made in Toledo. If the point wavers, even in a manner imperceptible to the unpractised eye, the blade must go back to a renewal of its fiery discipline.

At one table a man, working by aid of wax and a sharp pointed needle like instrument, is busily engaged in the lettering of a blade. At

another table is an artisan pounding with a tiny sharp edged sort of hammer, working out a handle pattern. There are several hundred employees in this sword factory, and a great many of them are boys under twenty, but the most trusted workers are not often young.

PET MONKEY CONVICTS COUPLE OF MURDER

Often a mute witness has given the most convincing evidence in a suit or trial at law. For example, many a dog, by displaying naturally his affection for his master, has confounded the pretenses of the man claiming to own him. It remained for a monkey, the only witness of the crime, to convict two persons of murder.

The Ackermann circus was giving performances in Constantinople not long ago. Its manager was found dead in front of a cage containing an Indian monkey, to which, because of his affectionate playfulness, had been given the name Scamp. It was shown easily that the manager had been stabbed to death at the moment he was feeding Scamp, of which he was very fond. By the man's body lay a tin dish and remnants of the meal he had been giving the monkey.

Two members of the circus troupe, a married couple named Starr, were suspected of the crime, for they had quarrelled with the other performers. But the Starrs protested their innocence vigorously and no criminating evidence against them could be found.

So the Judge determined to reconstruct the murder; a plan adopted not infrequently and derived, probably, from the ancient trial by ordeal.

At the hour at which Scamp had been fed, the circus tent was deserted by all employees. Then the Starrs were ordered to approach Scamp's cage, which they did rather hesitatingly. The instant the monkey saw them he flew into a paroxysm of rage. Never before had he exhibited such violent anger, for, as has been said, he is of an amiable and playful disposition. Chattering fiercely, Scamp hurled himself against the bars of the cage, making frantic attempts to seize the Starrs. Suddenly fear succeeded rage, and Scamp cowed in a corner, shivering and whimpering.

The Judge and police were deeply impressed by the scene, during which Starr and his wife tried vainly to maintain composure.

At the next sitting of the court the monkey was led in. Only a few minutes before Scamp, in high good humor, had permitted some strangers to pat his head, stroke his back and "shake hands" with him. But scarcely had he entered the court room and caught sight of the Starrs than he became infuriated and tried to spring at them. Then again the remembrances of the tragedy he had seen overwhelmed Scamp and he crouched from them, straining at his chain to escape from their presence.

No spoken evidence could have been half so eloquent. Despite their emphatic and repeated denials, Starr and his wife were adjudged guilty.

Lost On Mt. Erebus

— OR —

A Boy Explorer At the South Pole

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XIV.—A Voice From the Past.

As if to mark time on his questioning, there came sundry sudden distant detonations, not unlike mine explosions. Yet the deep, shaking reverberations were far more terrible, though hardly louder than the far-off roar of artillery.

Drawn from the terrors threatening to undermine them, they both gazed fascinated at the dread sight above, until Hawley saw a slow, dull, reddish stream burst from the very outlet that had given them so warm a place to sleep, and pour itself upon the glacier ice.

Vast volumes of steam rose up, obscuring the further view up there. This continually increased as the vast ice surface was met and melted before the stream of living fire.

"That accounts for this underground water, Madge. For years this ice has packed and packed as the glacier moved downward. But now the unusual force of the internal fires has burst all bounds. If I mistake not, this whole ice field will melt and crumble away."

A loud grinding up and down the ice pack drowned out the distant reports from the summit of Erebus.

For several hundred yards the opposite wall of the crevasse gradually caved away, like the crumbling down of an earth bank being undermined by water.

Still their own side, beyond some shallow caving at the edge, did not give way. Madge, looking this way and that, now grasped Joe's arm and pointed to where this gentle caving in had exposed a transverse cave, not of ice but of ice-lined rock and earth.

Over the lower edge of this lay what looked like a human form. Its back was toward them, but Hawley could see an extended arm with a crooked hand and fingers pointing toward the growing river below. Still Joe did not speak. He was thinking, reasoning out these amazing revelations. Finally he gave Madge a reassuring hug.

"I have it at last," he shouted. "We may escape yet."

"Have what? How can we escape? Oh, Joe! I—I wish we—we were somewhere else."

"So do I. But we will get somewhere else. You'll see. Now that I understand it may not be so hard after all."

"For heaven's sake, dear Joe, do explain what you mean."

"This underground or under ice stream has been tricking and growing for days as the volcano grew restive—see?"

"Yes. But how does that help us out now?"

"I don't know that it does. But it explains why, when the eruption finally took place, that this ice cap began to cave. For all that this crust of snow and ice are everywhere on top, we know that inside of this mountain are fires, seething with a glowing heat. Finally the inevitable caving in began. This happened at the right time to enable you and me to get across on the safe side."

"What do you mean?"

"That upper side is all ice—or water—while we here seem to be stranded on the solid earth and rock of the mountain itself. Of course, there is a sheathing of ice over it, where everything has been frozen up for goodness knows how long."

"But when that sheathing melts, won't we go with it?"

"I hardly think so. On this side we seem to have struck close to solid earth. Perhaps our tumble in here is a good thing after all."

"I'm sure I hope so. But how can I help looking down, just as it first beckoned us to fall in here? What? Are you going up to it? Please don't."

Hawley not only was making his way cautiously in that direction, but drawing Madge after him, holding her with one hand firmly, but ever so gently.

The girl did not really want to stay back. Indeed, nothing would have induced her to separate herself from Joe in such a place. But she did think for a moment that Hawley was taking a needless risk.

Though the body was partially leaning over the chasm, Joe soon saw that its lower parts were imbedded in a block of ice that was still intact, though jarred from its connection with the solid masses that were not yet shaken loose by the melting influences below.

"There are others here," exclaimed Joe, drawing closer. "Is this another polar mystery?"

Madge, peering from behind, uttered a terrified little scream, then braced up as better became a girl of real nerve.

Behind the fallen figure were three others, crouching in unnatural attitudes, but mostly like men overcome by sleep or stupor.

A few dead coals in their midst denoted that here had once been some kind of fire.

So real and natural were these forms and their caverned surroundings that Hawley involuntarily put out a hand to touch a protruding foot of the sprawled figure which had first caught his eye.

His mittened fingers struck solid ice, clear as crystal.

Hurriedly he felt of one of the others nearest.

"Why, they're all sheathed in ice. Good heavens, Madge! These poor men are dead, frozen for goodness knows how long in the heart of this glacier."

"But this one with the beckoning hand. Hasn't he fallen? Ah! Isn't he falling—now?"

As she spoke the outermost figure, which they had seen from the first, began to move. Joe's touch, or the disintegrating influences working below, now caused that block of ice to give way.

(To be continued)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES.

LIGHTNING BURNS SHOES, SOCKS

During a recent thunder storm, Grantsburg, Wis., Clarence Westlund had an experience which he will not soon forget. While sitting with his feet on the stove hearth Westlund was struck by a current of lightning, which hit his feet, burned the soles off his shoes, also his stockings, and badly burned the soles of his feet. The current then passed up his leg, around the body and back to one of his shoulders. Except for blistering, he is uninjured.

GARDEN 6,930 FEET HIGH

One of the most extraordinary botanical gardens in the world is that laid out, at an altitude of 6,930 feet, on the "Little St. Bernard," near the valley of Aosta, Italy.

This garden, established by the late rector of the hospice, M. Chanoux, comprises specimens of practically all mountain flora, whether it grows in the Alps, the Balkans, the Carpathians, the Caucasus, the Pyrenees, the Himalayas or among the mountains of America, Japan and New Zealand.

It was begun in 1892, but was not actually ready for inspection until 1897, when the rector of the hospice intrusted it to the care of Prof. Vaccari.

SOAP FROM CLAY

Soap from clay is the promise made by a group of British chemists who have been working on the utilization of this plentiful material for a number of years and who have just established the commercial usefulness of their discoveries. Their work is being described in a series of articles in a technical paper by Prof. F. C. Weston, a leading British authority on colloidal chemistry who has been in touch with their experiments.

Stripped of all technical verbiage what this group has discovered is a method of making use of China clay which is found in large quantities both in Britain and the United States, not as an adulterant, but as an ingredient in soap making. Soap, as most people know, is made now from fat and fat is scarce and expensive and is becoming scarcer and more expensive every year. China clay is plentiful and cheap. It can be had for the digging and the process of turning it into soap-making material is cheap and easy. It is claimed that it can be used up to fifty per cent. in combination with the usual fatty acids in soap making and that the soap thus made lathers as well, is as cleansing and as pleasant to use as soap made in the old way of all fat. What this means to industry may be realized when it is stated that fats for soap making cost at present in England something like \$200 a ton while the refined china clay can be produced and sold at an excellent profit for something like \$75 a ton.

So far, the clays used have been from the famous Cornish beds but experiments with Georgia clays have demonstrated that they can be used equally well and no doubt there are many

other clays in the United States that are equally suitable.

The process by which the clay is prepared is simplicity itself. After mining it is purified by a combined washing and chemical process and the resultant finely divided clay after being run into a settling tank is dried and is ready for use. It is a soft soapy substance without a trace of grit.

The purified clay has also been used in England in the manufacture of printing inks, for color striking, and a substitute for much more expensive chemicals in the vulcanization of rubber.

GERMAN PAPER SUITS UNFIT FOR WEAR HERE

Walter H. Burton, a Chicago woolen merchant, who returned from Europe recently, says that the paper suits made in Germany, which were apparently being boosted by certain officials of the Administration in Washington, would be of no use in this country on account of the heat.

"During the long war," Mr. Burton continued, "the Germans had to fall back upon all kinds of materials to make clothing out of, as they had no wool or cotton to make cloth. Their manufacturers did wonders with paper. They made shirts, underwear of all descriptions, collars, caps, sheets, towels and bed coverings. The tablecloths in the hotels when I was in Germany three weeks ago were nearly all made of paper except at the Atlantic Hotel in Hamburg, which is owned by the Hamburg-American Line, and has been furnished from the supplies that were intended for the ships.

"The paper suits and underwear are all right to keep people warm in cold weather, but they are very trying in the summer, even in Germany, where the temperature is much lower than in New York and there is less humidity.

"The underwear and the shirts stick to one when they become soaked through with perspiration and have to be removed in pieces. The suits look O. K. until the rain comes, and then good-by clothes. They shrink up and are likely to fall apart suddenly in a manner that causes confusion to the wearer. People who wear these paper suits have to take to shelter directly a shower comes on and wait until it is over, which might mean several hours."

Mr. Burton said he saw good serviceable suits sold retail in London in the stores of Mallaby Deely, a member of Parliament, and other tailoring establishments, for the equivalent of \$14 in American currency. He added that the duty on low grade woollens in the United States was about 35 per cent., so that allowing for duty, freight and profit the suits could be imported and retailed here at \$30 each for the coming winter. The fit was not quite the regulation Fifth avenue style, he added, but with a little alteration would be quite presentable and would wear well for business purposes.

WILD BOAR HUNTING

By Paul Braddon.

Most of my early life was spent on the plains and in the wildernesses and fastnesses of the mountains. A portion of my time was spent in the service of the Government, acting as guide to various exploring and surveying parties.

It was in the summer of 1854 that General D—— came to me to know if I would take charge of and act as guide for a party of distinguished foreigners who wished to do some shooting on the plains. I consented, providing they would permit me to accompany them as one of the party. Well, they accepted my conditions. The party were mostly Germans and Austrians, the highest in rank among them being a prince of the royal blood—Prince Carl.

I soon found that they were jolly good fellows in spite of their titles. When we went into camp, as we did every night, Prince Carl always took his turn in bringing wood and water.

Prince Carl (I always called him plain "Carl") was broiling a steak taken from the rump of the first buffalo we had shot. His face was all aglow with enthusiasm, for he had enjoyed the exciting chase immensely.

"It was excellent sport!" he ejaculated.

"Buffalo hunting is the choice of all hunting on the face of the earth in my opinion," I returned, American-like, wishing to feel that America was ahead in everything.

"Well," he said, "St. John, we'll not dispute the point; it's purely a matter of opinion, anyhow. But tiger hunting in the jungles of India is, to my mind, a little more exciting."

"Not as good as buffalo," I persisted.

"And then there's boar hunting, our national sport, so to speak. The chasing of a boar will make the blood of every true sportsman run high."

"Pooh! A boar's a wild hog, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"And squeals the minute he's covered, of course."

"Does he!" with a smile, and the prince lighted his pipe with a brand from the fire. "St. John, do you ever expect to go to Europe?"

"I don't know. Perhaps."

"If you do, I promise you that you will change your opinion after I've treated you to a boar hunt, as I should undoubtedly do if you came."

This was all that was said about the matter at the time. But we were together for several months after that, and he and I became warm friends. When the time for parting came I could not question the warmth or genuine character of his invitation to pay him a visit in case of my making a trip to the old world. "If I ever go to Europe you'll see me of a certainty," I returned as we shook hands for the last time. "I'd like to hunt for wild hogs."

It was about five years after this that I went to Europe.

I wrote to Prince Carl. He replied immediately on receiving my letter. His reply showed the same old cordiality and he repeated his warm invitation to come and see him.

Three weeks after landing in Liverpool I reached the house of Prince Carl, and barring the confounded scraping and bowing, it was very pleasant to be an inmate of his house.

The prince and a few friends had been out only a couple of days before, and there was still some of the boar meat left in the house—confound it! I should say castle.

A boar hunt had been arranged to take place the second day after my arrival, and of course I was made one of the party.

A finer day for the boar chase could not have been selected.

At last we were all in readiness and it struck me that they made a great many preparations, if boar hunting was what I call "pig-sticking."

Never before had I seen such a vicious-looking lot of dogs.

A ride of an hour brought us to the edge of an open woods, in which Carl said he hoped we might start a boar, as the horses could more easily pursue him here than where the growth was heavier.

Two of the wild boars broke from a nearby covert, where they had been feeding. Like a flash they crossed our line of vision and disappeared, separating and following gradually diversing lines.

Carl glanced at me. I nodded and away we went as fast as the powerful horses could carry us, following in the direction of the hounds.

Faster—faster! The excitement of the chase was beginning to grow on me.

How we flew! I never stopped to reflect that I was new to boar hunting. I was drawing up on the hounds. I knew that, though I could not see them, for their cries were closer.

Such speed was more than reckless—it was madness—it was insanity.

Carl called to me to pause.

I was vaguely conscious that he did so, but it made no difference to me then.

What I wanted was to get on faster and toward that object I devoted every feeling.

Now I was pulling sharply on this rein, now on the other, to avoid collision with some giant tree which obstructed a straight course; and every few seconds I was obliged to dodge to save myself from being swept from the saddle by some low, branching limb. Suddenly the hounds gave cry in a different tongue.

My well-trained horse understood it, though I did not, and the movements he made called my attention to him, which was hardly done when I was nearly lifted from the saddle, the reins being wrenched from my hands; I went over my steed's rump and landed on the earth in a sitting posture. It stunned me and drove every bit of breath from my body.

My steed had gone on a few feet further and then had stopped short, much to my surprise. But I soon saw the reason. The boar had been brought to bay and was now surrounded by the dogs, who jumped at and worried him while they hemmed him in, waiting for the arrival of the huntsmen, and taking care to keep out of the way of those long, curled and gleaming white tusks. As I gasped for breath and slowly arose to my feet I faced the "wild hog" and all my contempt for the animal vanished.

He was the perfect picture of wild ferocity,

and as I saw his greenish-red glaring eyes fastened on me I would have given a thousand dollars to have been in the Rockies facing a grizzly.

And such a sound as came from his throat! I know of nothing to liken it to. It was not a howl, nor a yell, nor a shriek, but it was a blood-curdling combination of them all, with a grunt under it. His first charge was on the dogs.

They scattered like chaff before a gale, yet taking care—exhibiting a remarkable intelligence—to keep him hemmed in.

Snarling, snapping they closed in on the boar. Then I saw the manner in which he made use of the long, backward curving tusks that projected from his lower jaw. A dog had impudently approached too close. The hog made a dash, his head was swiftly lowered and was then yanked upward with all the immense strength that resided in the muscles of his short, thick neck.

The point of the tusk nearest the dog caught him under the belly, and when the boar's head was so swiftly raised the sharp tusk cut like a knife and gashed him and laid him open to the very backbone.

The boar now charged on the steed I had ridden. The horse was an old boar hunter and rapidly wheeled about on his hind legs, presenting his broadside to the animal just so that a man on his back could have delivered the boar a telling and deathly blow. But I, his rider, was not in my saddle to give him that thrust.

Heavens! What a scream was uttered by the horse the next minute. The boar's sharp tusk, already reddened by the dog's blood, had laid open the flesh on one of the horse's hind legs, cutting to the bone and severing every tendon it encountered. Leaving the horse, the boar now came at me with his hideous and immense mouth wide open.

I had lost my rifle at the time of my fall from my horse and the only weapon I now had in my possession was a stumpy, two-edged dagger, which Carl had given me just before starting. "It is with that we give him the finishing stroke," he had said at the time. There was no time to ponder over the situation; it was fight or run.

Fight or run? I remembered my bet, and although I had not regained my breath I drew the hunting-knife, and the boar lowered his head, made a rush, tossed up his head—I struck—then reeled back with a groan.

The point of his tusk had entered the flesh just above my knee, and had gashed me to my thigh, though fortunately not very deeply. I no longer had a scoffing word for the boar. He was a worthy victim for any man's steel.

I heard shouts and cries of alarm. Carl and the others were coming. Ha! They should not say that I was a coward, that I had turned tail!

Blindly I fought the brute, slashing and cutting at him, aiming at his eyes and trying to destroy his sight.

The cries drew nearer. I was retreating; I could not help it. But though he forced me backward, I kept my face to him.

Again the boar was about to charge. I tried to step back quickly, and planted myself against the trunk of a tree, much to my consternation, for now I formed the best of targets for those cruel tusks. But my wits did not desert me.

The dogs were snapping and snarling about him, but as long as he did not feel their teeth he paid no attention to them.

"Sic him—sic him!" I gasped, hoping to arouse the dogs into attacking him, and drawing his attention from me.

In vain. In just one second that tusk would be ripping me open as it had the dog.

I raised my knife, prepared for at least one last grand effort, and—

Crack! The rifle of Hans, an old hunter, suddenly spoke, and the boar stopped short in his wild onset.

Like a flash he suddenly turned and darted to one side, and following him with my eyes I saw him making toward Hans.

Half way between us the boar staggered, then planted his fore hoofs at wide angles, and tossed his head, and swiftly flashed his eyes around on the dogs, who leaped and growled and dashed and snapped at him.

Hans flung himself from his horse, who stood stock still just where he was left. Keeping under cover, Hans quickly placed himself in the rear of the boar.

Then he bounded swiftly forward, the dogs clearing the way for him, and the next instant Hans was beside the boar, grasping an ear in one hand, his two-edged dagger in the other, preparing to strike. Quick as lightning the dogs, no longer showing fear, sprang on the boar and were in at the death.

Hans struck, the dogs fastened their fangs in the boar, and the animal fell, bleeding in a hundred places.

"Well done!"

So Carl exclaimed, and those with him applauded as well the splendid exhibition of skill shown by Hans in dispatching the boar.

"I never turn tail!" I gasped, and then I must have fainted from loss of blood, for the next I recollect was when I awoke and found myself in bed, suffering exceeding pain from my wound.

That was my first, last and only boar hunt. I did not care for any more. I had not been educated up to that kind of sport perhaps, and much preferred the hug of a grizzly to the sharp tusks and sudden, swift assaults of a boar.

Carl paid the wine when I was able to get out of bed ten days later.

The other boar had been easily captured.

I must confess that I enjoyed the dainty tidbits of boar meat which they brought me while I was confined to bed, and yet—perhaps it's because I am still a regular backwoods, up-and-down Yankee Doodle American—I don't know but what I relish bear or Buffalo meat as well, if not a little better, than that of "wild hogs."

"Yes," I admitted, as I bade my host good-by, "it is exciting hunting. I'll not say another slighting word about boars, for there's no denying that they can fight."

"Why, Willie, what has kept you so late? Did you have to stay after school? I'm afraid you have been naughty." "No, ma'am, I ain't never naughty. Bobby Jones was licked for 'bein' very naughty, an' I stayed after school to hear him yell."

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

NO BOTTOM

A miner lowered into a subterranean cavern opened by a miner's blast at Volcano, Nev., some time ago, was unable to discover the ends of the fissure. Stones dropped through the opening could be heard bounding from wall to wall, but there was no sound indicating that they had reached the bottom. Sparkling stalactite on the sides of the cavern were revealed by lights lowered through the opening.

BOY BEATS GIRLS BAKING

Wesley Sheldon, a fourteen-year-old boy of Ashburnham, Mass., was declared the winner of the Worcester County Farm Bureau breadmaking contests, in which many girls competed from every city and town in the county. During a period of three months he made fifty-eight loaves of bread in nineteen bakings, performed seventy-six hours of housework, and used forty-eight hours in doing errands for his mother.

KILLED WITH SCRUB BROOM

A very large hawk was killed recently by the wife of Lewis Hall, who lives on Route 2, Bladen, N. C., with a common house scrub broom. The woman was in her house using the broom when her attention was directed to a commotion among her chickens in the yard, when she ran out with broom in hand and found a large hawk busy trying to capture a fowl. She used the broom and killed the hawk at the first lick. Other than the excitement, the chickens were unharmed.

BEAR VISITS BARNYARD

A big black bear, which thrives on little pigs and fat ducks, is the latest vagabond to worry residents of the Forty-ninth avenue district, South Vancouver, Canada.

Mr. Bear, who evidently lives in an adjacent forest, has made two trips to the city. Thus far he is at large.

His latest visit took him to the yard of John Greaves, on Forty-ninth avenue and Prince Edward street. Greaves and his son-in-law heard the pigs a-squealing. They came; the bear went.

Four pigs had been mauled. Four ducks, partly eaten, evidently had composed bruin's first course.

REMAKING NEW ZEALAND

More rapid changes in animal and vegetable life are taking place in New Zealand than almost anywhere else in the world. The native Polynesian race is disappearing before the European; the native wild animals amount to little in contest with the imported species, many of which now run wild; the streams are full of American and European trout, which attain an enormous size, and even the forests are being replaced by the planting of foreign trees as the native ones disappear.

Eleven million larches, oaks, spruces, Douglas firs and eucalyptus have already been planted and vast numbers of seedlings are coming in all the time. The reason for replacing the native trees with species from the United States, Europe and Australia is that those of New Zealand are too slow of growth, although some of them produce excellent timber. The implantations thrive everywhere.

LAUGHS

"In Japan you can buy a wife for a few old sardine cans and some beads." "Well, a good wife is worth that."

"He always was a bad egg, but nobody seemed to notice it while he was rich." "Yes, he was all right until he was broke."

Elocutionist—Strike for your altars and your fires! Strike! Till the last armed foe—Fan—Dat's two strikes, mister! One more an' yer out.

"My husband has a terrible attack of grip." "What are you doing for him?" "Nothing. He has his life insured for sixty thousand dollars."

"I understand that after waiting twenty years she married a struggling man?" "Yes, poor chap! He struggled the best he knew how, but she landed him."

Weary Clerk—Have you any fountain pens that won't blot when they are nearly empty? Dealer—Why, sir, I have fountain pens that won't blot when they are entirely empty.

Crabshaw—If you insist on this new gown I'll have to get it on credit. Mrs. Crabshaw—As long as it's going to be charged, dear, I may as well get a more expensive one.

First Boarder—Smith must be behind in his board. Second Boarder—What makes you think that? First Boarder—I notice he's had the neck of the chicken for the last three Sundays.

Rube—Where's yer boy naow? Josh—He's in New York. Rube—Which side's he on by this time? Josh—What d'yer mean? Rube—Is he sellin' gold bricks a'ready or buyin' 'em yet?

"Mrs. Caswell, while you were in Venice did you see the Bridge of Sighs?" "Oh, yes, I saw what they called that; but, my land! I've seen bridges ten times its size without ever going out of Pennsylvania!"

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

THE U. S. NAVY'S SWIFTEST VESSEL

Steaming at the rate of 38,257 knots, the U. S. "Satterlee" in her recent official trials broke all American speed records. The best previous record made by an American war vessel was 37.04 knots. The "Satterlee" is driven by two 14,000-horse-power Westinghouse compound turbines, which developed 31,223 horse-power and broke all records for vessels of this, the destroyer, class.

PORCELAIN COIN IN GERMANY

The first German porcelain money is being manufactured in Meissen, Saxony, and will consist of 300,000 twenty pfennig pieces for use on the Hamburg elevated railway.

The city of Meissen, as well as several other towns, has ordered porcelain coins for local use, with a view of solving the present unclean and easily tearable paper currency. The German Republic is said to be about to introduce porcelain coins ranging from 10 pfennigs to five marks.

CHOW'S BELT A DREAM

Six one-pound cans of opium, alleged to have been smuggled, were taken from Chow Sing, seventeen, of No. 42 Sands street, Brooklyn, N. Y., as he was leaving the pier at the foot of 56th street, that borough, the other day.

As Chow, who is employed on a steamship, passed through the gate to the street, Patrick Gaffney of the customs service noticed that his waist line seemed inflated. A search revealed the cans, attached to a belt worn inside his clothing. The prisoner was taken before United States Commissioner Hennessy and was held in \$1,000 bail.

POUGHKEEPSIE KITTEN KILLS A SNAKE

Dutchess County, N. Y., has the prize fighting kitten. A half-grown cat owned by residents in the outskirts of this city fought a life and death battle with a black snake, and not only worsted the snake, but gloated over it and played with it after it was hors de combat.

The snake, of the black variety, had been basking in the sun when the kitten pounced upon it. The snake immediately started to coil about the young cat, but the latter was too wary to fall into the trap and rushed about with open mouth and outspread claws, slashing at the snake. The battle kept up for nearly 20 minutes, the snake bleeding profusely from the long, deep scratches given by the kitten's claws. Finally the cat sank its claws into the reptile's head and pierced its brain. The snake died, but as the body kept up the twitching that is usual with a reptile until sundown, the kitten kept guard, alternately biting and scratching, until the body lay still.

Then a farmer measured the snake, which was fully five feet long, and one of the biggest ever found in this section of the country.

\$1,000 FROM ONE COW

A thousand dollars a year on one cow.

This is the remarkable record just established by Maj. E. S. Person, a widely known cattle breeder of Minot, N. D. A Guernsey heifer on his farm near here, besides producing nearly \$500 worth of milk in the last year, had a calf which sold for approximately this amount.

The office of the State Dairy Commissioner is sending out field workers to interest farmers in keeping fine dairy cattle. The farmers are being encouraged to form organizations which under the provisions of a bill enacted by the last Legislature may obtain State aid for the purchase of purebreds.

The growth of the dairy industry is reflected in the official reports of the Dairy Commissioner's office. Fifty thousand dollars was the return to producers last year, more than three-fourths of this amount being in marketed butterfat, according to the reports.

While North Dakota is still considered a banner spring wheat State, J. J. Osterhaus, one of the Dairy Commissioners, believes that within a few years the dairy products will carry a value greater than that of the grain produced.

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GOOD READING

TARANTULA ON SHOULDER

After setting down a crate containing a bunch of bananas that he carried across the store on his back, John Lunak, an employee in a grocery store at Devil's Lake, N. D., felt something crawling on his shoulder, and putting up his hand, came in contact with the largest tarantula ever seen in the city. A bite from the creature would have meant almost certain death.

DOG BEATS BADGER

The old theory that a badger can whip any dog that ever walked on four legs has sustained a rude jolt. Dan and Ray Baker, Junction City, Ky., while crossing a field spied what they believed to be a raccoon hole. Securing shovels, they began to dig, and they found their quarry to be a mature badger. A husky bulldog owned by the boys discovered the fact about the same time. He hesitated not, however, and the battle was on. Towser won, "ace high."

RABBIT FUR VALUABLE

Millions of rabbits are killed annually in the British islands and in Australia for their skins, or, rather for their fur, which is used in making felt hats. Great quantities of the English rabbit-skins are sent to the hat manufacturers in the United States, but first they go to the continent of Europe to have the long, useless hairs laboriously pulled out by cheap hand labor. Satisfactory machines to do this work are said to be lacking. After the skins reach America the close hair, or fur, is shaved off to be made into felt.

STORM STRIPS CHICKENS

Many visitors were attracted to the farm of Harvey Lyman, between Newport and Stanton, Del., one day, to view the freak effects of a night's storm, news of which had spread.

Nearly all the chickens, ducks and geese were blown away. The few that remained had been so tossed about they were stripped of their feathers. There was only one chicken coop left, the others having been blown so far they have not yet been located.

The barn was blown down and the roof taken from the house, but the machinery and farm wagons in the barn were not even moved. A large water tank on the second floor was carried several hundred feet. Clothing was blown from the third floor of the house and lodged in trees several hundred feet away.

SIBERIA IS LARGE

A traveler in Siberia says that few people realize the immensity of that country. To think of a single state stretching through 130 degrees of longitude and possessing one-ninth of all the land surface of the globe is staggering. The United States and all its possessions, and all Europe, except Russia, could be put in Siberia, with land enough left over to make thirty-five states like Connecticut. He had thought of it as a convict settlement only, as most persons do, no doubt. He found it a country of nearly 9,000,-

000 people, 97 per cent. of whom are either natives or voluntary immigrants, and all living better and enjoying more political and religious liberty than people in European Russia have. Where he traveled it was like Minnesota, where wheat, rye and vegetables and strawberries, raspberries and currants grow, and sheep and horses graze unsheltered the year round.

TRACING A COUNTERFEIT BILL

The tracing of counterfeit bills back to the person responsible for their issue is a curious and exciting employment. The experts assigned by the Government to this work are among the most skilful members of the Secret Service. The protection of the currency depends in large measure upon their efficiency, and the pains they take are almost infinite. A strange story told by one of these operatives illustrates the difficulties which they meet and overcome.

One day a bank clerk in Cincinnati detected a counterfeit \$20 bill in the deposit of a small retail grocer. The operative was sent for and undertook the case.

He found that the grocer received the bill from a shoe dealer, who had it from a dentist, who had it from somebody else, and so on, until finally the Secret Service man traced it to an invalid woman who had used it to pay her physician. When questioned, she said the money had been sent to her by her brother, who lived in New Orleans.

The operative looked up her brother's pedigree, and was certain that he was the man wanted. He had a bad record, was the proprietor of a die, and was just the sort of person to be a confederate of counterfeiters. The operative went to New Orleans with the handcuffs in his pocket, but he was a little premature.

The man proved to the detective's complete satisfaction that he had received the money as rent for a small house he owned in Pittsburg. The operative took the next train for Pittsburg.

The tenant of the house proved to be a traveling oculist, who spent most of his time on the road. He was then away in the West, but the operative saw him on his return and he at once recognized the bill. It had been given him by a patient in Cincinnati, the very point from which the operative had started.

The patient was a boss carpenter. The Secret Service man got his address from the oculist and made a beeline for the city. He had a premonition that something was going to happen, and he wasn't disappointed.

The carpenter was an honest old fellow, and told the detective without hesitation that he had received the bill from Mr. Smith for repairing his barn. Mr. Smith was the small grocer in whose bank deposit the counterfeit had turned up. The detective flew to his store as fast as a taxi could carry him and found it closed. He had left town. His shop, it was proved, was a mere blind.

NEW CROP OF MILLIONAIRES

West Virginia may have a new crop of millionaires in the near future.

The price of a ton of coal varies from \$3.50 to \$14 in this district; probably the average on coal not sold under contract is close to \$8.50. The same coal went begging at prices of from \$2.25 to \$3 in the spring of 1919. The cost of mining coal is scarcely more than \$3 a ton in the most expensive mines. When an operator loads a fifty-ton car it can be seen that he should make at least \$250 if it is not sold under contract and if he is not afraid of being indicted. Of course some operators are tied up entirely by contracts and have had little spot coal. Others, rather than run the chance of indictment and unfavorable publicity, are not selling their coal at more than \$5 a ton.

But still others are selling coal for what bidders are willing to pay, and some of them seem to be willing to pay high prices. For this reason, West Virginia will probably have a new crop of millionaires, much to the annoyance of the "First Families."

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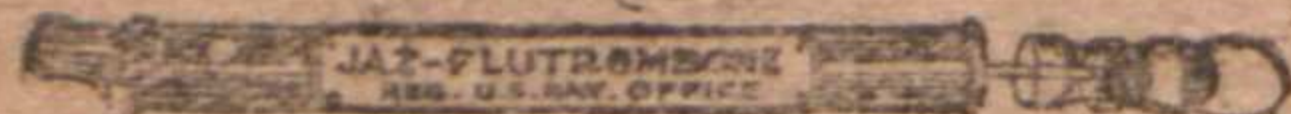
ABOUT OUR STOMACHS

How insulting we can be to our stomachs and get away with it is well illustrated in a report made to Science by Ralph C. Holder, Clarence A. Smith and Philip B. Hawk on some experiments they made at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia.

Some students were fed for a week on savory food, carefully weighed, in an attractive room and all their excretions were weighed. Then for two days the same kinds of food were made disgusting by mixing together meat, biscuits, jelly, cornstarch, oleo margarine, pudding, etc., in a porcelain dish smeared with charcoal. This they ate upon a dirty table strewn with dirty dishes, while, to make the meal repulsive to the nostrils, some indol was sprinkled under the table. One of the students could not eat it, but the other, who managed to get the unsavory mess into his stomach, digested within one per cent. as much of his meals as he had when daintily fed.

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Julius Maier, alias Leiter, a former Sing Sing prisoner who has been a fugitive for fifteen years, has just been re-captured and was again imprisoned July 11. An odd coincidence landed him behind bars again.

Charles F. Rattigan, Superintendent of Prisons, sent S. J. Bergin, Parole Agent, to Washington, D. C., and Bergin returned Maier to Sing Sing. Maier's downfall is laid to a similarity of names and a case of mistaken identity.

The dragnet had been spread by Federal authorities for another man whose name is Julius Leiter, a tailor. The police brought in the former Sing Sing prisoner, who is also a tailor.

In looking through the rogues' gallery, Washington authorities found the picture of their prisoner. It appeared on a circular asking his arrest as a parole violator who vanished in 1905. So Supt. Rattigan was notified that the long-sought ex-convict was in the toils. Since violating his parole Maier has traveled all over North America. He still owes the State two years on his old conviction in New York of forgery.

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